SARAWAK DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024 VOLUME 10

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Greetings to all members.

In this 10th volume, we are happy to share with you some news updates from July to September 2024. Top on my list is a meeting with the Right Honourable Premier of Sarawak to present SDI's Strategic Transformation Plan. The team was led by YBhg. Datuk Amar Jaul Samion, our Chairman. YAB Premier has indicated his support for the transformation plan and shared his views on the research and communication work that can be undertaken by the Institute particularly for PCDS 2030. A presentation on the Transformation Plan was also made to the Honourable Sarawak State Secretary in July, where he also indicated his support for the transformation of SDI. In addition, YB SS also supported the establishment of a formal channel with SDI to share research findings and data with the government through his Office and EPU Sarawak.

The establishment of the Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC) was recently announced by the State. AI's potential as personalised helper and disruptor cannot be denied. Are we well prepared for the changes it will bring into our lives? Professor Dr. Narayanan Kulathu Ramaiyer discussed this in his article on "Leadership in Responsible AI for Shaping Future Society" and suggested strategies by the SAIC to develop and enhance capacities to build thought leaders in many emerging fields through AI, and position Sarawak as a future global leader in AI. At the same time, he calls for all citizens to be AI-wise and to adopt responsible use of AI.

Under the "Do you know" column, we have compiled information on what is hydrogen, the different types of hydrogen and the future of hydrogen as a source of clean energy. We hope it will provide a more in-depth understanding on hydrogen.

We are also pleased to include reports on two members' visits to Sarawak Metro and CENTEXS. We wish to thank members who were able to make time to join the visits. There are also reports on several Brown Bag Talks, Public Talks and ongoing research conducted. We hope members will find the reports useful and informative.

Not to be forgotten is our 28th Annual General Meeting which will be held at 3.00 pm, 10th October 2024 at the Pelagus Room, 3rd Floor, Grand Margherita Hotel. We look forward to everyone's attendance at the AGM.

We wish everyone happy reading.

Lelia Sim
CEO

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

FEATURE - LEADERSHIP IN RESPONSIBLE AI FOR SHAPING FUTURE SOCIETY

by Professor Dr. Narayanan A/L N. Kulathu Ramaiyer, Director Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations (ISITI) UNIMAS

This article has been written in response to the recent announcement by Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas on the establishment of the Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC). This initiative is aimed at raising Sarawak's capacity to play a big role in the emerging era as we are already beginning to see a paradigm shift in human consciousness.

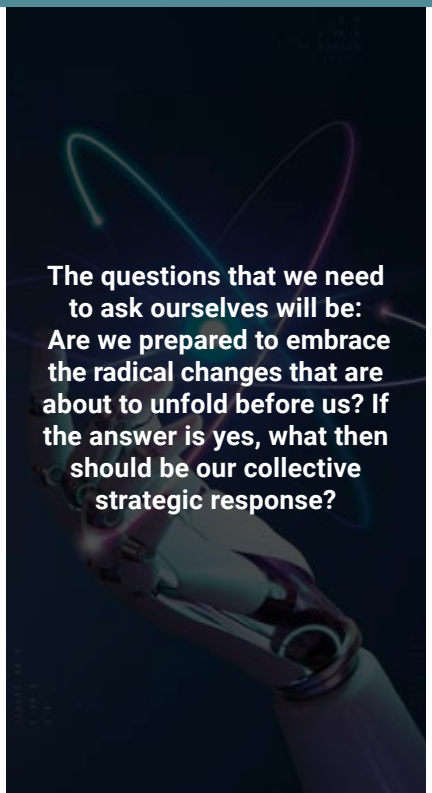
As the transitioning to an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered world is taking shape, a transformative shift in the collective consciousness of humanity is silently becoming apparent. How else can we justify ChatGPT's engagement with 100 million weekly users? How can we then make sense of its mind-boggling scale of its influence in everything that we do?

The arrival of AI-as-a-friend and AI-for-everyone will have a profound impact on our lives. A typical journey with Generative AI often starts off with the sharing of information and knowledge via targeted promptings and innocent experimentation. The love-hate relationship and bonding continues to grow in direct response to the ever-increasing amount of time spent in mutual intimacies. This relationship is bringing about global shift through its immense value co-creation capability.

Through self-inquiry and insightful engagements with AI, an inquiry channel is established as one's own personal journey. As personalised engagements leads to a deeper understanding, AI, is indirectly changing the way we think of ourselves. We are already seeing AI's expanding role as intimate friend, helper in times of need, thinking partner and even as trusted advisor making a significant difference in the lives of people.

The centre will have take cognisance of the transformation potentials of enhancing life with AI as a personalised helper for game-changers. The role will be in nurturing game-changers irrespective of their domains or fields to enhance capacities to enable individuals to become the thought leader whom we could only have dreamt of becoming in the past.

It has to be noted that future AI systems will not only about the use of conversational AI for information seeking users. The centre will have to build upon talents in other emerging fields such as predictive AI through the deep learning models, AI powered devices and instruments in critical areas such as military and surveillance. There is a need to formulate blueprints the state's security, economic development and environmental sustainability through AI-powered ecosystems. It is timely to invest in talents for nurturing future AI-powered platforms with it autonomous systems' workflow. Co-operative AI systems will be expected to transform fields of agriculture, educations, healthcare, education, finance and many other areas.



Sarawak's response and commitment to embark on a transformation agenda in the upcoming era of AI-empowered life can therefore be seen as both timely and important. SAIC's role will need to be defined clearly in driving change and positioning the state as a future global leader. It is important to take on a commanding position in ushering the evolutionary shift in consciousness, for people of all walks of life, as their way forward way to realising the state's aspiration to become a thriving society. SAIC will therefore need to look beyond merely enhancing competitiveness but rather on ways to embark on a cultural shift to drive Sarawak to become a future global leader.

The blossoming of an engaged AI-powered expedited-economy calls for a radical shift in strategic thinking and is expected to culminate in policy changes relating to citizen safety and well-being. This can be seen as a logical expansion of the state's digital transformation agenda to take us beyond the post-Covid strategy and response. There is a need to invest heavily on talent development, as a milestone to prepare all citizens to become 'AI-wise'.

Ideally, this calls for a radical rethinking of education as life-learning systems with an ability to harness AI's potentials fully. Future leadership will have to draw on networks of local and global talents to build on the collective capacity for creativity and inventive thinking by design.

In terms of AI capacity development, and AI-based service delivery, localised Large Language Models specialising in Sarawakian resource collections will need to be developed. Infrastructural capacity in merely enabling digital transformation cannot be seen as adequate anymore, as every individual will now have to engage fully in AI-based workflows for unique local content generation and media creation.

As a quick-win step, the centre will need to embark on balanced-life thinking workshops and multi-stakeholder dialogues to promote a participatory approach in re-shaping future directions. At the same time, by defining policies and incentives for all agencies and companies, the centre will facilitate the ease-of-entry for 'early-adopters' to jump on the AI-bandwaggon. This will also involve pilot programme for selected agencies in embarking on life and as a game changer initiatives.

AI-literacy programmes will eventually need to be provided to all civil servants. These targeted programs will cover strategic management that takes into account AI's capacity for improving productivity across all areas. What is truly required will be radical approach in bringing about a transformation where all segments our population will be able to embrace responsible AI as a way of life.

Efforts undertaken with regards to empowering digital transformation will include infrastructure & info-structure services, knowledge processing services, edge computing services and end-user service to cut across all regions of the state. Therefore, the inclusive wealth-sharing and sustainable growth as envisaged under the Post Covid Development Strategy (PCDS 2030) will have to be further intensified. Digital transformation itself will have to be completely reimagined; digital will no longer be just promoted as an alternative way of life, but gradually shaped to become "a part of You" that complements and enhances everyone's abilities.

Local and global startups will begin to disrupt aspects of our lives way beyond what we see today. Organisations who do not engage in renewed innovation pipelines will become sidelined. Furthermore, the convergence of creative content and media forms, will cause many more shocks to all the agencies of the state.

All sectors such as education, health, manufacturing, logistics, smart cities, etc will need to benefit from integrated efforts in bringing a transformational shift. We are already seeing even creative jobs are being taken over by AI. The effect will eventually see a lesser human involvement in many jobs that can be enhanced by AI-powered workflows. This calls for extensive retraining and orientation of employees to embark on jobs realising higher value and higher impact. Specific programs could focus on "how to partner AI to achieve greater value and impact" and in shaping responsible AI for a harmonious living.

Intellectual property relating to artistic content will need to be re-defined together with all stakeholders to allow growth of creative capacity and explorations without inadvertently compromising integrity and character development. These initiatives will need to look into how human-ness can be nurtured preserved in challenged or disrupted conditions.

There will also be dangers of people becoming overly reliant on technology, to an extent where individuals could lose their capacity to think for oneself. AI tends to inadvertently dominate as a thinking partner and as such increasing dependencies on technology. At the same time, as with all other technologies AI will also lead to participatory divides. The focus of the centre should adopt a human-centred policy in designing interventions and embark on strategic leadership to enable the aspired progressive movement without overlooking social threats and dangers.

The Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC) will prepare Sarawak for the AI-powered future, recognizing the transformative impact of AI on society. The initiative calls for strategic responses including talent development, AI literacy programs, and the creation of localized AI models. It emphasizes the need for a cultural shift, reimagining digital transformation, and addressing potential social concerns while promoting responsible AI use. The goal is to position Sarawak as a global leader in the AI era, fostering a thriving society through balanced development and inclusive growth across all sectors.

Generative AI
will change everything!

PAST EVENTS

SDI BROWN BAG TALK: GAMIFICATION STRATEGIES TO INCREASE AWARENESS AND EDUCATION ON TROPICAL DISEASES AND REPRODUCTION HEALTH

30th July 2024 | ZOOM Application

The talk was presented by Associate Professor Dr. Jacey-Lynn Minoi, Director, Gamification Centre, Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and a member of SDI. She introduced gamification as a powerful tool for engagement with the community and highlighted how it could be utilised for awareness and education on health. She shared several case studies that explored the use of gamification strategies and how they have been ingeniously designed to increase awareness and educate people on health issues such as eradicating malaria and the development of sexual health.

The recording of the talk and the presentation slides are available at ***www.sdi.com.my***

SHARING SESSION ON MAPPING THE DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN SARAWAK AND UNDERSTANDING ITS IMPACT ON RURAL MICRO ENTREPRENEURS

8th August 2024 | AZAM Conference Room

Dr. Yuen Kok Leong, Senior Research Officer at SDI, presented the findings of a collaborative study completed in 2023 by SDI and the University of Technology Sarawak (UTS). The study aimed to map digital entrepreneurship initiatives by both federal and state governments. These initiatives were classified into six domains: policy, market, human capital, culture, support, and finance. The research found that while some initiatives benefited entrepreneurs from various backgrounds, others were unevenly distributed across the domains.

Representatives from 18 organizations, including the Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), Tabung Ekonomi Gagasan Anak Sarawak (TEGAS), Swinburne University of Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), and the Ministry of Food Industry, Commodity, and Regional Development (M-FICORD), attended the session. Attendees gained valuable insights from the research findings, particularly those related to rural entrepreneurs. The Q & A session at the end of the presentation was lively, with attendees affirming the findings based on their observations on the ground. Most participants noted the similarity of efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and suggested more inter-agency collaboration in the future.

TALK ON THE "WHAKATŌHEA IWI, A MĀORI INDIGENOUS TRIBE, AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND: DIGITAL, CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES, COMMUNITY-BASED R & D PROJECTS & COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING"

15th August 2024 | AZAM Conference Room

Mr. Danny Paruru, Iwi Development Manager from the Bay of Plenty, North Island, New Zealand presented on the innovative strategies of the Whakatōhea Iwi, a Māori Indigenous tribe from Aotearoa, New Zealand with staff and members of SDI, AZAM Sarawak and Faradale Media-M Sdn. Bhd.

Mr. Danny's presentation provided insights into the Whakatōhea Iwi's digital, cultural, and environmental strategies. He highlighted the tribe's 50-year integrated strategies for cultural preservation, which address five critical areas: environment, education, health, social, and economic development. The long-term vision aims to protect and enhance the tribe's heritage while fostering sustainable growth. A key highlight was the introduction of a special mapping project designed to aid in the recovery and preservation of the tribe's cultural sites and historical heritage. This project shows the tribe's commitment to safeguard their history for future generations. He also showcased the Whakatōhea Waiata application, a music collection app that blends tradition with technology. This app allows users to access and learn the words of Te Whakatōhea's independent poets, ensuring the preservation and accessibility of cultural knowledge.

WHAT IS HYDROGEN?

Hydrogen is a clean alternative to methane, also known as natural gas. It's the most abundant chemical element, estimated to contribute 75% of the mass of the universe.

Here on earth, vast numbers of hydrogen atoms are contained in water, plants, animals and, of course, humans. But while it's present in nearly all molecules in living things, it's very scarce as a gas – less than one part per million by volume.

Hydrogen can be produced from a variety of resources, such as natural gas, nuclear power, biogas and renewable power like solar and wind. The challenge is harnessing hydrogen as a gas on a large scale to fuel our homes and businesses.

Why is hydrogen important as a future clean energy source?

For many years, we've used natural gas to heat our homes and businesses, and for power stations to generate electricity. In the UK, 85% of homes and 40% of the country's electricity currently relies on gas; in the US, 47% of households rely on natural gas and 36% on electricity[1].

When natural gas is burnt, it provides heat energy. But a waste product alongside water is carbon dioxide, which when released into the atmosphere contributes to climate change. Burning hydrogen does not release carbon dioxide.

What does hydrogen look like?

Hydrogen is an invisible gas. So, despite their colourful descriptions, there is no visible difference between the different types of hydrogen. Here's our guide to unlocking the current hydrogen colour code.

Green hydrogen
Green hydrogen is **made by using clean electricity from surplus renewable energy sources**, such as solar or wind power, to electrolyse water. Electrolysers use an electrochemical reaction to split water into its components of hydrogen and oxygen, emitting zero-carbon dioxide in the process. Green hydrogen currently makes up a small percentage of the overall hydrogen, because production is expensive. Just as energy from wind power has reduced in price, green hydrogen will come down in price as it becomes more common.

Blue hydrogen
Blue hydrogen is **produced mainly from natural gas**, using a process called steam reforming, which brings together natural gas and heated water in the form of steam. The output is hydrogen, but carbon dioxide is also produced as a by-product. So, the definition of blue hydrogen includes the use of **carbon capture and storage** (CCS) to trap and store this carbon. Blue hydrogen is sometimes described as 'low-carbon hydrogen', as the steam reforming process doesn't actually avoid the creation of greenhouse gases.

Grey hydrogen
Currently, this is the most common form of hydrogen production. Grey hydrogen is **created from natural gas, or methane**, using steam methane reformation but without capturing the **greenhouse gases** made in the process. Grey hydrogen is essentially the same as blue hydrogen, but without the use of carbon capture and storage.

Black and Brown hydrogen
Using black coal or lignite (brown coal) in the hydrogen-making process, these black and brown hydrogen are the absolute opposite of green hydrogen in the hydrogen spectrum and the most environmentally damaging. Generally, any hydrogen **made from fossil fuels** through the process of 'gasification' is sometimes called black or brown hydrogen interchangeably.

Pink hydrogen
Pink hydrogen is generated through electrolysis powered by **nuclear energy.** Nuclear-produced hydrogen can also be referred to as purple hydrogen or red hydrogen. In addition, the very high temperatures from nuclear reactors could be used in other hydrogen productions by producing steam for more efficient electrolysis or fossil gas-based steam methane reforming.

Turquoise hydrogen
This is a new entry in the hydrogen colour charts and production has yet to be proven at scale. Turquoise hydrogen is **made using a process called methane pyrolysis** to produce hydrogen and solid carbon. In the future, turquoise hydrogen may be valued as a low-emission hydrogen, dependent on the thermal process being powered with renewable energy and the carbon being permanently stored or used.

Yellow hydrogen
Yellow hydrogen is a relatively new phrase for hydrogen made through electrolysis using **solar power.**

White hydrogen
White hydrogen is a **naturally occurring, geological hydrogen** found in underground deposits and created through fracking. There are no strategies to exploit this hydrogen at present.

Why is hydrogen important as a future clean energy source?

Yes. There are already **cars** that run on hydrogen fuel cells. China has the highest number of hydrogen fuelling stations for road vehicles worldwide, where you can fill up just as you would with petrol or diesel and in the same time frame as a traditional fuel car. Japan has the second highest number of these fuelling stations, followed by South Korea, Germany and the US.

Hydrogen is also an exciting lightweight fuel option for road, air and shipping transportation. The international delivery company DHL already has a fleet of 'H2 panel vans', capable of travelling 500km without refuelling.

Why is hydrogen important as a future clean energy source?

In the future, some hydrogen colours may fade in importance and others burn brighter. What's certain is that the hydrogen rainbow will play a significant role in reaching **net zero**, as we reduce our historical reliance on fossil fuels and look to green alternatives to power our homes, businesses and transport.

Sources from:
1. https://www.nationalgrid.com/stories/energy-explained/what-is-hydrogen
2. https://www.nationalgrid.com/stories/energy-explained/hydrogen-colour-spectrum

ON-GOING RESEARCH/PROJECTS

Currently in Progress

01

MASTER PLAN FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE RESETTLEMENT AREAS 2050: BATANG AI, BAKUN, MURUM AND BENGOH

The Interim 2 report has yet to be presented to the Study Steering Committee pending the confirmation from EPU Sarawak for the meeting.

02

CULTURAL RESOURCE MAPPING - EXPLORATORY PROJECT IN KUCHING DIVISION

The Cultural Resource Mapping (CRM) is a project that aims to collect and catalogue the various tangible and intangible heritage present in the Kuching Division. The CHAMPS digital platform that will collect and display entries, has completed its software development. Local content creators for English, Bahasa Sarawak, Iban, Bidayuh and Mandarin have been identified and the team is in discussions with them to promote the CHAMPS platform within their respective language segments. The CHAMPS platform is available for viewing at www.champs.com.my. The website hosts a visitor/"view only" version of the platform. To upload entries to CHAMPS, the website also contains links for downloading the CHAMPS app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. More information about CRM is available at *https://champs.com.my/About and https://sdi.com.my/crm/*.

03

PUBLICATION ON "SARAWAK CIVIL SERVICE (SCS) - ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT :REFLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES OVER 60 YEARS"

The publication is now undergoing final additions and revisions and is expected to be finalized for printing by early October 2024.

04

GREATER TOGETHER: MAPPING OF PADDY PRODUCTION ECOSYSTEM IN BATANG LUPAR GRANARY AREA, SRI AMAN

The Sri Aman Development Agency (SADA) twice invited the research team to present the proposal paper in their Steering Committee meetings in May and June 2024. After the presentations, the Steering Committee approved the study. However, the SADA secretariat then informed SDI that it had to go through the bidding process for the study as required by the SFS' Office. SDI submitted the bidding study proposal on 19th September 2024 and is still awaiting the response from SADA.

05

MULTIPLE INDICATORS OF POVERTY: A CASE STUDY IN KUCHING

The research team has made significant headway in the ongoing study on the multiple indicators of poverty in Kuching. Currently, the quantitative data has been fully entered and is in the process of thorough cleaning and verification to ensure the highest standards of data integrity. Concurrently, preparations for the qualitative data collection, which will involve comprehensive house visits and interviews, are in place but have experienced a slight delay. This delay is due to the need to prioritize other pressing commitments that have recently emerged. Nevertheless, the team will resume the qualitative data collection at the earliest opportunity, as this phase is critical to capturing the nuanced, multidimensional nature of poverty within the community.

ACTIVITIES

PRESENTATION OF SDI STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN TO YB STATE SECRETARY OF SARAWAK

23rd July 2024 | State Secretary's Office

YBhg. Datuk Amar Jaul Samion and Mdm. Lelia Sim presented the SDI Strategic Transformation Plan to YB Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Abu Bakar bin Marzuki, State Secretary of Sarawak to seek his feedback and support. YB State Secretary concurred with the need to do impact analyses and assessments of government projects and initiatives to examine their outcomes. He also supported the proposed areas of change for the Institute, namely the composition of the board members, organisational structure and the establishment of a formal channel to share research findings and datasets with the government through his office. He also emphasised the need to inculcate understanding and practices on environmental sustainability among the civil service in line with the PCDS 2030 aspirations.

MEMBERS' VISIT TO SARAWAK METRO SDN BHD

6th August 2024 | Sarawak Metro Headquarters

SDI members were briefed by Ts. Mazli Bin Mustafa, CEO of Sarawak Metro, Mr. Alexius Barieng, Director of Corporate Communication for Socio-Economic Enhancement Development (SEED) and Bumiputera Relations cum SDI member, and Mr. Prabu Ganesh A/L Subramaniam, Deputy Project Director of Kuching Urban Transportation System (KUTS).

Members had the opportunity to learn about the latest plans and updates for KUTS, especially on the Autonomous Rapid Transit (ART) system, and had a lively discussion on the reality and expectation of public transportation systems for Kuching City. YBhg. Datu Ik Pahon, Mr. Ravi Gopal, Dr. Dorothy Chong and staff of SDI joined the visit.

PRAXIS 2024 CONFERENCE

13th- 14thAugust 2024 | Renaissance Hotel KL

The PRAXIS conference is an annual conference series organised by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. It is a public policy conference designed to bridge ideas and to translate policy into practice. This year's edition, themed *Policies for a Better Tomorrow*, was attended by two researchers from SDI, Dr Yuen Kok Leong and Tang Tze Lee. The conference was divided into two forum style formats – Spotlight Sessions and Research Sessions. Here, panel members spoke at length on the subject before receiving audience questions and feedback. The Research Sessions contained presentations on research findings by researchers from various organisations.

The conference also featured keynote addresses from two cabinet ministers – Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, YB Datuk Seri Utama Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, and Minister of Human Resources, YB Steven Sim Chee Keong. They spoke at length about the contemporary issues and government policies such as the New Industrial Master Plan (NIMP) 2030, green technology, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), and others. It was also noted that Malaysia would be in a good position to lead the way as it assumes the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2025.

The two-day conference saw four Spotlight Sessions and four Research Sessions. Both types of sessions covered a variety of subjects – Malaysia's global trade amidst a shifting global landscape, advancing Malaysia's economic complexity in service of the NIMP 2030, adapting the labour force to generative AI, regulating social media, Malaysia's energy transition options, as well as urban solutions and health/social care in an aging Malaysian society. Each session comprised of three to four subject matter and was moderated by an ISIS staff member. Overall, it was a good conference where latest developments in specific industries and fields were shared and participants were able to gain much insight into pertinent issues through discussion with experts and other participants.

MEMBERS' VISIT TO CENTRE OF TECHNICAL EXELLENCE SARAWAK (CENTEXS)

20thAugust 2024 | CENTEXS Headquarters

YBhg. Dato Haji Syeed Mohd Hussien bin Wan Abdul Rahman, CEO of CENTEXS, and Dr. Dayang Hanani binti Abang Ibrahim, Deputy Director for Digital and Green Energy Academy briefed SDI members and secretariat on CENTEX's background, on-going programmes and courses offered, activities and its current projects.

The delegation were brought to view various laboratories and test beds on campus for wireless 5G connection, Green Energy (Hydrogen, Solar, Wind, Cascading Dams), Textile Technology (Keringkam and Songket), Precision Farming (drip-irrigation system for paddy farming), and others. Mdm. Lelia Sim led the delegation of SDI members and secretariat.

PRESENTATION OF SDI STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION PLAN TO YAB PREMIER OF SARAWAK

2nd September 2024 | Office of the Premier of Sarawak

YBhg. Datuk Amar Jaul Samion presented the SDI Strategic Transformation Plan to the Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Abang Haji Openg, Premier of Sarawak at the brief meeting. Also present were YBhg. Datu Ik Pahon, YBhg. Datu Antonio Kahti Galis, Madam Lelia Sim and YBhg. Datu Mohamad Junaidi bin Mohidin, Director for General Administration Unit, Department of the Premier of Sarawak.

The half-hour meeting was to inform and seek approval from the Right Honourable Premier on the transformation plan for the Institute and its goal to provide greater support to the Sarawak Government through solutions-based research, impact analysis of government development initiatives/projects, and strategic communication work. The Right Honourable Premier indicated his support for the transformation plan and that the government would provide funds to support the Institute which will be decided through a MMKN paper to be tabled at the Sarawak Cabinet Meeting.

INDUSTRY FORUM ON ESG @FEBS UNIMAS 2024

19th September 2024 | Hilton Kuching

SDI collaborated with the Faculty of Economics and Business, UNIMAS to organize an Industry Forum on ESG during the Finance, Economics, and Business Sustainability Conference 2024 (FEBS 2024). The forum saw the participation of SDI's corporate members discussing their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) journey and experience. The forum, moderated by SDI's member, Dr. Lau Seng, featured three panelists: Mr. Franklin Berandah Edward Thomas from the Natural Resources and Environment Board (NREB), Mr. Robert Lau from Kuching Port Authority (KPA), and Encik Mohamad Irwan Aman from Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB), each offering perspectives from statutory bodies and government-linked companies on ESG.

Mr. Robert Lau shared on KPA's efforts to replace fossil fuel-powered machinery with cleaner, energy-saving alternatives. Encik Irwan followed with a presentation on SEB's ESG timeline, particularly its commitment to achieving the United Nations Global Compact's Business Ambition for 1.5°C. Mr. Franklin concluded by highlighting NREB's role in supporting other agencies' ESG initiatives, including the relevant legislation, policies, and future plans in line with the PCDS 2030.

The forum's Q & A discussion covered the benefits, challenges, and specific ESG initiatives such as waste management in Sarawak.

GROWING THE ECONOMY AND MEETING THE CARE NEEDS OF THE MALAYSIAN SOCIETY

24th - 25th September 2024 | ISIS, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SDI was invited to participate in a Care Economy Conference organized by APPGM-SDG. Held at ISIS Malaysia, the event was a follow-up to the earlier Roundtable Discussion on the Care Economy that took place from June 26-27.

Dr. Yuen Kok Leong represented SDI and served as a discussant for a paper on regional disparities that could affect the development of the Care Economy in Malaysia. He was joined by a colleague from the Institute of Development Studies, Sabah.

Dr. Yuen provided insightful comments on the intra-regional disparities in Sarawak, which may impact the delivery of the care economy. For instance, while Sarawak is often perceived as having poor road access—true for many isolated communities—the major road arteries are well-connected through two main networks: the Pan-Borneo Highway and the Second Trunk Road.

In addition to discussing the Sarawakian context, Dr. Yuen offered feedback on the paper's emphasis on Global South examples, the depth of its policy analysis, and the moral considerations surrounding the care economy market. He also provided suggestions on improving the paper's structure and clarity.

Dr. Yuen recalled key points from the previous Roundtable Discussion, cautioning that failure to learn from the shortcomings of the national healthcare system could result in similar issues within the care economy.