

UMS, JSK Mantanani to strengthen marine biodiversity conservation

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and JSK Mantanani Island Resorts Sdn Bhd have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost collaborative efforts in marine biodiversity research and education focused on the Mantanani Islands.

The agreement formalises a partnership that began in 2023 when JSK Mantanani took proactive steps to combat the persistent poaching of nesting sea turtles on the island.

UMS Vice Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor said the MoU opens new avenues for joint research, technology

development, knowledge transfer and specialised training between the university and industry partners.

"This partnership is about more than just conservation. It's about fostering a resilient, informed and science-led approach to marine stewardship," he said during the signing ceremony at the university on Tuesday.

Prompted by growing concerns over declining turtle populations, JSK sought technical advice from UMS, laying the groundwork for a structured conservation initiative.

With guidance from UMS marine scientists, JSK successfully secured formal approval from the Sabah Wildlife Department to launch a turtle conservation programme.



Dr Kasim (third right) with Johnny Wong holding the signed MoA.

Several JSK staff members have since been trained and appointed as Honorary Wildlife Rangers, granting them legal authority to monitor beaches, relocate turtle nests and manage the JSK Turtle Hatchery.

The initiative has already seen positive outcomes, with two green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) nests protected so far, achieving a hatching success rate of over 90 per cent.

In addition to JSK, four other

industry players also signed MoU and Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with UMS. They are Sinar Majutera Travel & Tours Sdn Bhd, Osmosis Nutrition Sdn Bhd, Biocircular Technologies Sdn Bhd and VKL Enterprise.

JSK Mantanani, Osmosis Nutrition and Biocircular Technologies will collaborate with the university's Borneo Marine Research Institute, while Sinar Majutera Travel & Tours will work with the Centre for Borneo Indigenous Studies and VKL Enterprise with the Faculty of Sustainable Agriculture.

Present at the signing ceremony were JSK Mantanani Island Managing Director, Datuk Johnny Wong Chen Yee; Sinar Majutera Travel & Tours Managing Director, Datuk Seri Nasir Sakaran; Senior Manager of Osmosis Nutrition, Ng Weng Yee; Biocircular Technologies Managing Director, Lam Hua Wei and VKL Enterprise Managing Director, Sharizann Abdul Rahim.