

Universiti Malaysia Sabah acquires 5 new boats for marine research at IMB

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Universiti Malaysia Sabah, UMS, Institut Marin Borneo

UMS has acquired five new boats under the 12th Malaysia Plan for IMB to enhance teaching and marine research activities, replacing ageing research vessels.

Kota Kinabalu: **Universiti Malaysia Sabah** has acquired five **new boats** under the 12th Malaysia Plan to enhance teaching and **marine research** activities at its **Institut Marin Borneo**.

UMS Vice-Chancellor Professor Datuk Dr. Kasim Mansor said the acquisition was a strategic move to ensure marine research could be conducted more effectively and safely, in line with UMS's role as a regional and global leader in marine science and aquaculture. He said IMB had previously relied on ageing research boats, some of which were more than 20 years old, affecting the efficiency and safety of researchers and students.

"The acquisition of these new assets will further strengthen teaching and learning activities as well as research, particularly for Marine Science and Aquaculture students," he said during the launch ceremony of the new IMB boats at the UMS Jetty. **SPONSORED CONTENT** Cosmobeauté expands into Borneo with debut festival in KK Cosmobeauté Malaysia and beautyexpo will expand into East Malaysia with the launch of the Cosmobeauté Malaysia Borneo Festival 2026 at the Sabah International Convention Centre from May 25 to 26.

Read more His speech was delivered by UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Ir. Dr. Rosalam Sarbatly. Kasim said the procurement of the modern assets was also in line with the UMS Strategic Plan 2023-2027, which focuses on high-impact research and talent development.

Advertisement He added that the initiative supports the aspirations of the Ministry of Higher Education and the development of the Blue Economy, while reinforcing UMS's position as a leading reference hub for tropical marine science in the region.

"I hope all IMB members will fully utilise and properly maintain these assets to ensure the continuity of the university's research excellence," he said.

Advertisement Meanwhile, IMB Dean Associate Professor Dr. Ching Fui Fui @ Faihana Ching Abdullah said the five boats were procured under the RMK-12 Rolling Plan Five to replace outdated assets that were no longer suitable for use.

She said the new boats would significantly improve academic and scientific activities, particularly in carrying out practical training and field studies more effectively, efficiently and safely. The five boats comprise three vanguard-type vessels — UMS Enhalus, UMS Epinephelus and UMS Batillipes — and two catamaran-type vessels, namely UMS Cheilinus and UMS Astrea. Faihana said the names were inspired by marine biodiversity and IMB's research focus areas.

"Enhalus refers to the dominant seagrass species Enhalus acoroides found in Sepanggar waters, while Epinephelus is derived from the iconic grouper fish genus. "Batillipes is the scientific name for tardigrade or water bear, symbolising resilience and precision in marine biodiversity exploration. "Cheilinus and Astrea respectively refer to the wrasse fish genus, which is among the key research species under IMB's HICoE programme, and a coral genus, reflecting IMB's commitment to marine ecosystem conservation," she said.

Faihana added that all the boats are equipped with safety features that comply with the standards of the Sabah Ports and Harbours Department and are capable of accommodating crew members and passengers for research operations in Sabah waters. The Institut Marin Borneo, formerly known as the Borneo Marine Research Institute, is a UMS centre of excellence focusing on oceanography, sustainable aquaculture and marine biodiversity conservation.