

UMS engineering students visit Sabah Agro-Industrial Precinct

BP 1.12.2018 4

KIMANIS: The Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (Sedia) welcomed students from the Computer Electronics Engineering programme at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to the Sabah Agro-Industrial Precinct (SAIP) on Wednesday morning.

The visiting group from UMS was welcomed by Sedia staff from the Knowledge and Technology Management Division, led by Sedia Principal Senior Executive Justin Janim, who presented a briefing on SAIP facilities, programmes and initiatives.

The group of 52 fourth-year students were led by UMS lecturer Dr. Aroland Kiring, and sought to gain exposure on the use of machinery and technology in the agriculture sector.

The students were particularly interested in the controlled environment facilities (CEF) available at SAIP and its applications through Industry 4.0, whereby the parameters can be controlled remotely through smart applications.

The briefing was followed by a tour of SAIP and the available

facilities.

By 2017, all of the physical construction works on phases one and two of SAIP project development under the Sabah Development Corridor (SDC) initiatives, together with the procurement of various machinery and equipment, have been completed.

These two phases of development consist of six facility infrastructure, housing the Administration and Incubation Centre, Research, Development, Commercialisation and Innovation Laboratory, Post-Harvest Collection and Handling centre, food processing Production Line Facility, Herb Manufacturing centre, and CEF greenhouses.

The machinery and equipment at SAIP include over 45 laboratory equipment, specific for conducting plant tissue culture, horticulture research, product development, and food analysis.

More than 90 types of machinery and equipment are also provided for agriculture and herb downstream processing. SAIP is also currently

undergoing certification for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

With an estimated area of 185 acres, SAIP is envisaged as a centre of excellence in agro-biotechnology that optimises the state's biodiversity and abundant natural resources to produce higher value-added food and specialty products based on botanicals, aquatic plants and animals.

As one of the key economic clusters under SDC, SAIP serves as a test-bed for carrying out biotech-driven research and development and to develop biotech-driven businesses.

Unlike other existing science and technology parks in other states in Malaysia, SAIP has a distinct focus on SNPs, agro-biotech and health food products.

To encourage the development of downstream agro activities in Sabah, SDC fiscal incentives offered at SAIP include Investment Tax Allowance of 100% for 10 years, which can be offset against statutory income.

Among the initiatives available at SAIP include the Agro-SAIP

training programme, which has benefitted 2,020 participants from throughout Sabah over the span of 36 courses since its inception in 2012 up until October 2018.

The programme is meant to enhance skills, expertise and capabilities of local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and was established with the aim to empower technopreneurs in the agro-based industry, by giving the necessary exposure and transfer of knowledge, especially on the processing of agro-food and specialty natural products (SNPs).

Through the training programme, participants are given access to experienced speakers and industry representatives in various sectors; speakers well-versed in pharmaceuticals, controlled environment farming, post-harvest handling technology, agro-organic and agro-food industries, business and marketing through e-commerce.

Bio-science and biotechnology have been invited to come and share their experience and expertise with participants.