ISSUE #03 | MARCH 2022

CONNECTING

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION TO THE FORE

MDEC™

Inside:

#SayaDigital Campaign Catalyses the Growth of Digital Foundation for the Rakyat

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MYWiT Facilitates Digital Talent Recruitment for East Malaysian Companies

MD MALAYSIA DIGITAL

A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE DIGITAL NATION CONTINUES WITH MALAYSIA DIGITAL

About MDEC

MALAYSIA DIGITAL ECONOMY CORPORATION (MDEC) is the agency under the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia leading the digital transformation of the economy for 25 years. We aim to enable a progressive, innovation-led digital economy.

MDEC will continue to lead Malaysia towards becoming a globally competitive digital nation through the development and execution of the Malaysia Digital initiative, which aims to create substantial digital economic spill-over through equitable access to digital tools, knowledge, and income opportunities.

Predicated on a new framework built upon three primary components – Agility, Flexibility, and Relevance – Malaysia Digital is set to enhance Malaysia's value proposition to attract digital investments, firmly establishing Malaysia as the digital hub of ASEAN.

Contents

Foreword

CONTRARY to popular belief, digital transformation isn't really about technology. It is really about people.

Technology and innovation are something that will change with the times. Technology can be bought, sold, and developed. Technology can be simplified. As such, what is more important isn't the act of chasing the Next Big Thing, but to encourage and cultivate the ability to adapt to an increasingly digital world.

At MDEC, our goal is to drive digital initiatives, programmes, and opportunities for the betterment of Malaysia and the Rakyat. To do so, we need to ensure that we are developing the next generation of skills – to future-proof not only our entrepreneurs and businesses, but also ensure our youth and future workforce are ready for the challenges ahead.

This edition of CONNECTING delves into our purpose-driven initiatives such as the #SayaDigital Campaign, Funding Facilitation Programmes, and the enhanced MyDigitalWorkforce Work in Tech (MYWiT) programme.

The #SayaDigital Campaign aims to create awareness through basic digital activities and provide basic digital skills training to the community. Additionally, MYWiT, now with simplified eligibility criteria and incentive structure, is yet another initiative that will improve Malaysian's digital literacy and enable access to high-paying jobs.

Also, Funding Facilitation Programmes for 2022 will provide alternative funding, workshops, and incentives for companies to weather the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our efforts are further driven by the Malaysia Digital initiative and its new framework, which will do more than just enhance our nation's value proposition – it will catalyse new sectors and technologies that will ultimately help us enable a progressive, inclusive, and innovation-led society.

I hope our initiatives drive digital transformation not just for Malaysian businesses but also its people, so that we can embark on the journey to be a digital nation, together. Happy reading!

Mahadhir Aziz
Chief Executive Officer, MDEC

A Globally Competitive Digital Nation Continues with Malaysia Digital

Malaysia Digital is an Inclusive Initiative of Creating Digital Economic Opportunities for All.

INTRODUCTION TO MALAYSIA DIGITAL

Malaysia Digital is an initiative by the Government to converge digital with the economy by advocating and promoting ubiquitous use of digital in all economic activities.

MSC Malaysia will be enhanced into Malaysia Digital which aims to position Malaysia as a globally competitive digital nation.

This new initiative serves to accelerate Malaysia's digital economy and create substantial digital economic spill-over through equitable access to digital tools, knowledge and income opportunities.

It will also stimulate, spur and promote digital economic opportunities and activities throughout Malaysia, in support of and in attracting high-value investments.

Malaysia Digital's new framework will see – among other improvements – a refresh of the Bill of Guarantees, non-location-based incentives, and an expansion of locations for promoted activities.

Malaysia Digital was conceived around a three-pillar framework:

AGILITY

Offer greater **agility** for local and international tech companies by providing more options and flexibility for companies to choose from competitive fiscal and/or non-fiscal incentives.

FLEXIBILITY

Expand beyond designated locations into a nationwide initiative, providing more **flexibility** and opportunity for companies to grow, expand, or reinvest anywhere in Malaysia.

RELEVANCE

Continued **relevance** to accelerate Malaysia's Digital Economy, Malaysia Digital will feature improved governance and processes to meet the industries' diverse needs at speed.

Among the initial catalytic programmes include:

DE Rantau
- Establish Malaysia as the preferred Digital Nomad Hub.
- Boost digital adoption.
- Promote digital professional mobility across the country.

Malaysia Digital Trade
- Capitalise on immense opportunities in digitalisation that has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Drive interoperability and greater harmonisation of standards and regulatory approaches.
- Facilitate trade within Malaysia and across borders.

INTRODUCTION TO MALAYSIA DIGITAL

All You Need to Know About Malaysia Digital (Frequently Asked Questions)

8:30

MD
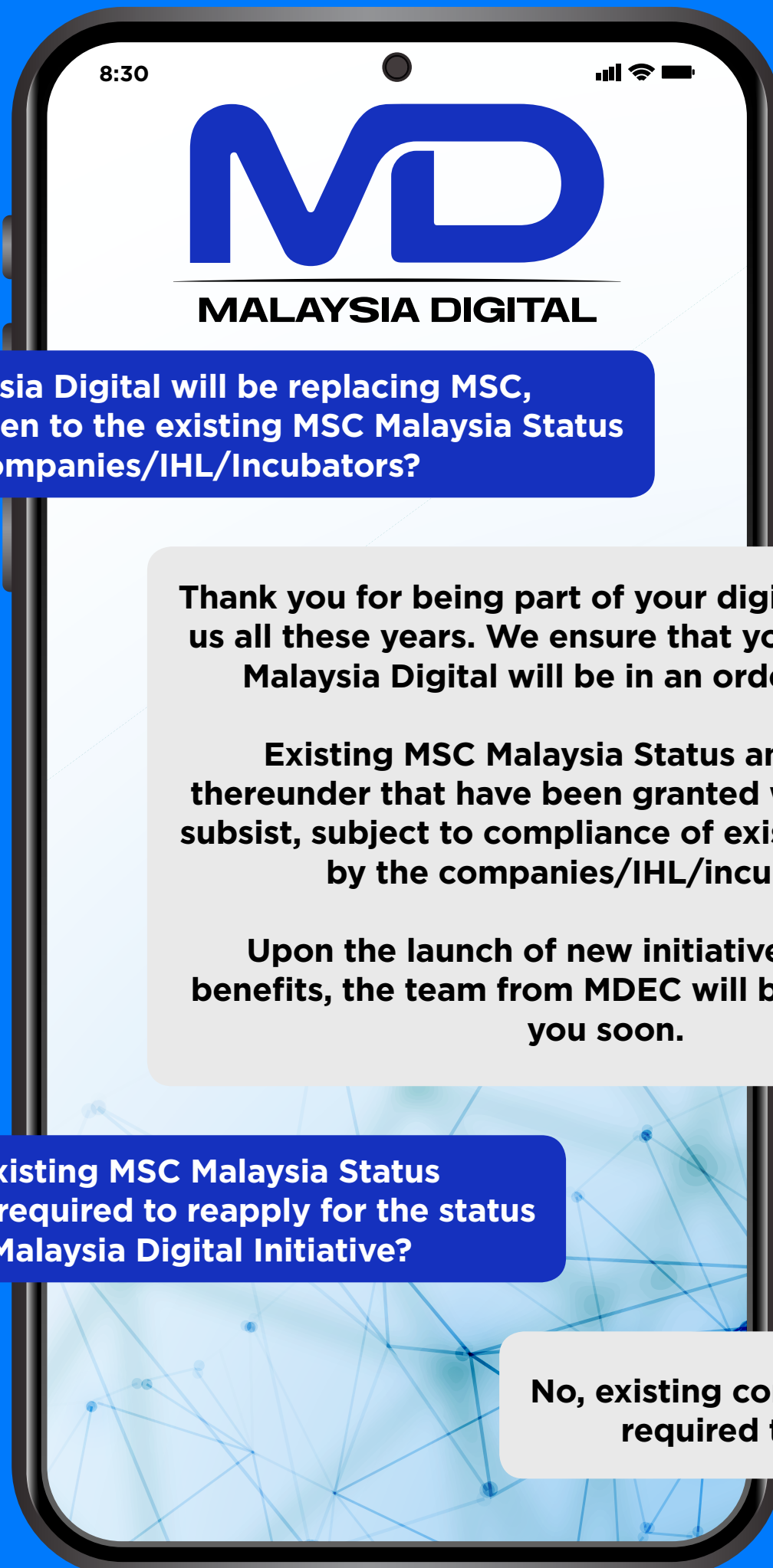
MALAYSIA DIGITAL

Q1 As Malaysia Digital will be replacing MSC, what will happen to the existing MSC Malaysia Status companies/IHL/Incubators?

Thank you for being part of your digital journey with us all these years. We ensure that your transition to Malaysia Digital will be in an orderly manner.

Existing MSC Malaysia Status and benefits thereunder that have been granted will continue to subsist, subject to compliance of existing conditions by the companies/IHL/incubators.

Upon the launch of new initiatives/statuses/ benefits, the team from MDEC will be in touch with you soon.

A1

Q2 Would existing MSC Malaysia Status companies be required to reapply for the status under Malaysia Digital Initiative?

No, existing companies are not required to reapply.

A2

8:30

Q3 What will happen to the existing MSC Malaysia Cybercities/Cybercentres/Digital Hubs?

A3 Existing MSC Malaysia Cybercities/Cybercentres/Digital Hubs will continue to provide ready infrastructure and a conducive business environment for MSC Malaysia Status companies as well as technology-related companies. More information will be provided in due time.

Q4 What will happen to my existing MSC Malaysia Status application?

A4 The latest announcement on MD would not affect: The incentives being enjoyed by the existing company; The current application that has been made/being made by the company. Those will be evaluated and processed as per current guidelines/procedures, which will remain status quo until further notice.

Q5 Should I wait and apply for the Status under Malaysia Digital?

A5 Companies can continue to apply for the current MSC Malaysia Status if it meets the eligibility criteria and conditions. Existing MSC will be rebranded to Malaysia Digital and will enjoy similar benefits under Malaysia Digital. Stay tuned for more information and updates from MDEC.

Q6 How will Malaysia Digital impact my business?

A6 Malaysia Digital is set to provide businesses with the agility, flexibility and relevance to the current market trends through a range of incentives and support. Two initial programmes have been identified namely DE Rantau and Malaysia Digital Trade. More information will be available soon.

YB Tan Sri Datuk Seri Panglima TPr Annuar bin Haji Musa, Minister of Communications and Multimedia Malaysia (middle) presented the certificate of appointment to Geng #SayaDigital Sarawak as witnessed by Mahadhir Aziz, CEO of MDEC.

#SayaDigital Campaign Catalyses the Growth of Digital Foundation for the Rakyat

MDEC Plays Significant Role to Ensure Digital Economy Growth Is Aligned and Understood by the People.

AS Malaysia's leading digital economy agency, MDEC has been focusing on the people's digital development and adoption in their daily life as well as entrepreneurs' business activities.

The growth of the digital economy must be aligned and understood by the people, particularly those who are in rural areas. Thus, MDEC plays a significant role in ensuring that this aspiration is achieved through programmes and initiatives under the #SayaDigital Campaign.

Digitalising society is a long and continuous journey, and it is one of Malaysia's vital efforts to execute in order to become a regionally competitive digital nation. MDEC will ensure that the majority of Malaysians are involved in basic digital activities such as using digital applications in smartphones, ordering food online and also doing daily tasks through digital applications.

CHAMPIONING DIGITAL ADOPTION

MDEC LAUNCHES THE #SAYADIGITAL MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN

1. Free weekly classes via Facebook
2. On the ground programme, Jelajah #SayaDigital Keluarga Malaysia
3. Part of the #SayaDigital Movement programme (2020) to upskill Malaysians
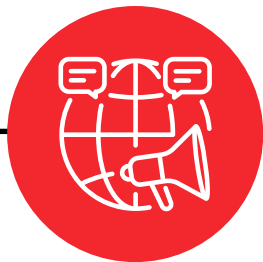
KEY FOCUS AREAS

1. **#SayaDigital Literacy** - Through the #SayaDigital Movement programme
2. **#SayaDigital Busines**s - Through programmes including eUsahawan, PeDAS, 100 Go Digital Coaching, SME Digital Drive
3. **#SayaDigital Income** - Through eRezeki, GLOW, eLadang programme
4. **#SayaDigital Human Capital Enhancement** - Through the #mydigitalmaker Movement programme, MYWiT
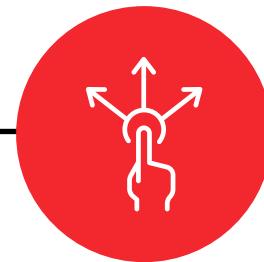
OBJECTIVES

1. Train young people to become Geng #SayaDigital volunteers
2. Create awareness through basic digital activities
3. Conduct digital readiness assessments
4. Provide basic digital skills training to the community

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. 3,000 views per session
2. Jelajah #SayaDigital Keluarga Malaysia organised in 6 locations covering Sarawak, Kelantan, Melaka, and Sabah
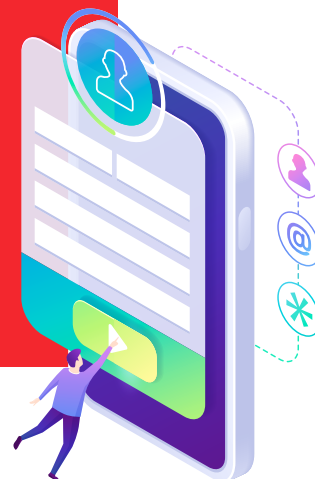
Saya DIGITAL

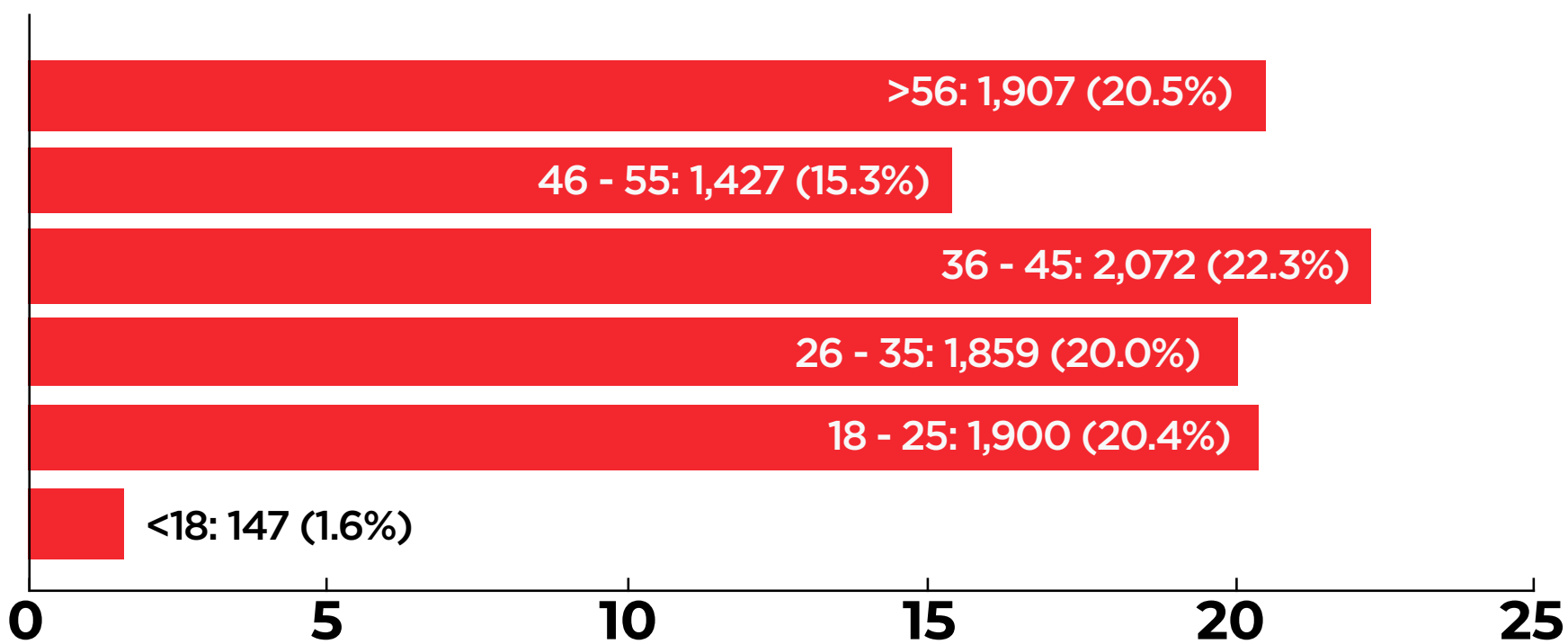## ACHIEVEMENTS

No. of Outreach Programme

12

No. of Registration

9,312

Breakdown by Age

>56: 1,907 (20.5%)

46 - 55: 1,427 (15.3%)

36 - 45: 2,072 (22.3%)

26 - 35: 1,859 (20.0%)

18 - 25: 1,900 (20.4%)

<18: 147 (1.6%)

| 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |

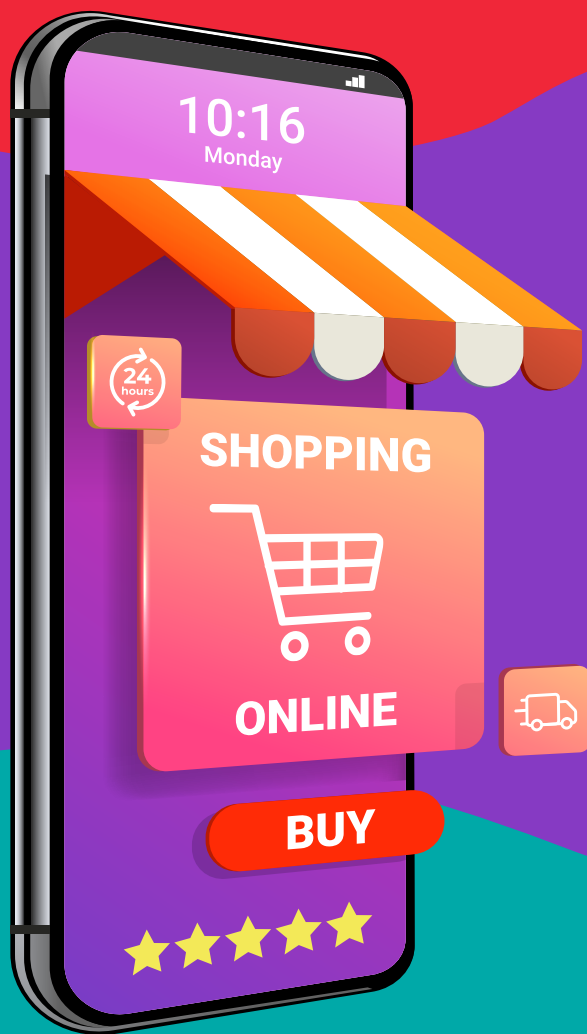**Successfully trained participants**

1,550

Geng #SayaDigital volunteers as instructors for the Digital Basic Skills Training Course

163

(As of 14 Feb 2022)

Key Achievements of E-Commerce in Malaysia

235,327

MSMEs adopting e-commerce in Q3 of 2021
Target 2021: 108,000

725,285

Cumulative MSMEs adopting e-commerce from 2016 to Q3 of 2021

Income from e-commerce transactions recorded:

2019	**RM675.4 bil**
2020	**RM896.4 bil**
2021	**RM1,091.4 bil**

MYWiT Facilitates Digital Talent Recruitment for East Malaysian Companies

MYWiT's Incentive Has Greatly Assisted a Kuching-based Creative Design Company in Getting Fresh Talents.

MDEC's Digital Talent Snapshot in Malaysia (Quarter 2, 2021 Report)

- More than half of digital talent in Malaysia are found in Kuala Lumpur & Selangor
- Little to no skilled-talent supply in other states
- Shortage of tech talent for local digital companies in other states
- Growth is limited by skills gap and mismatch
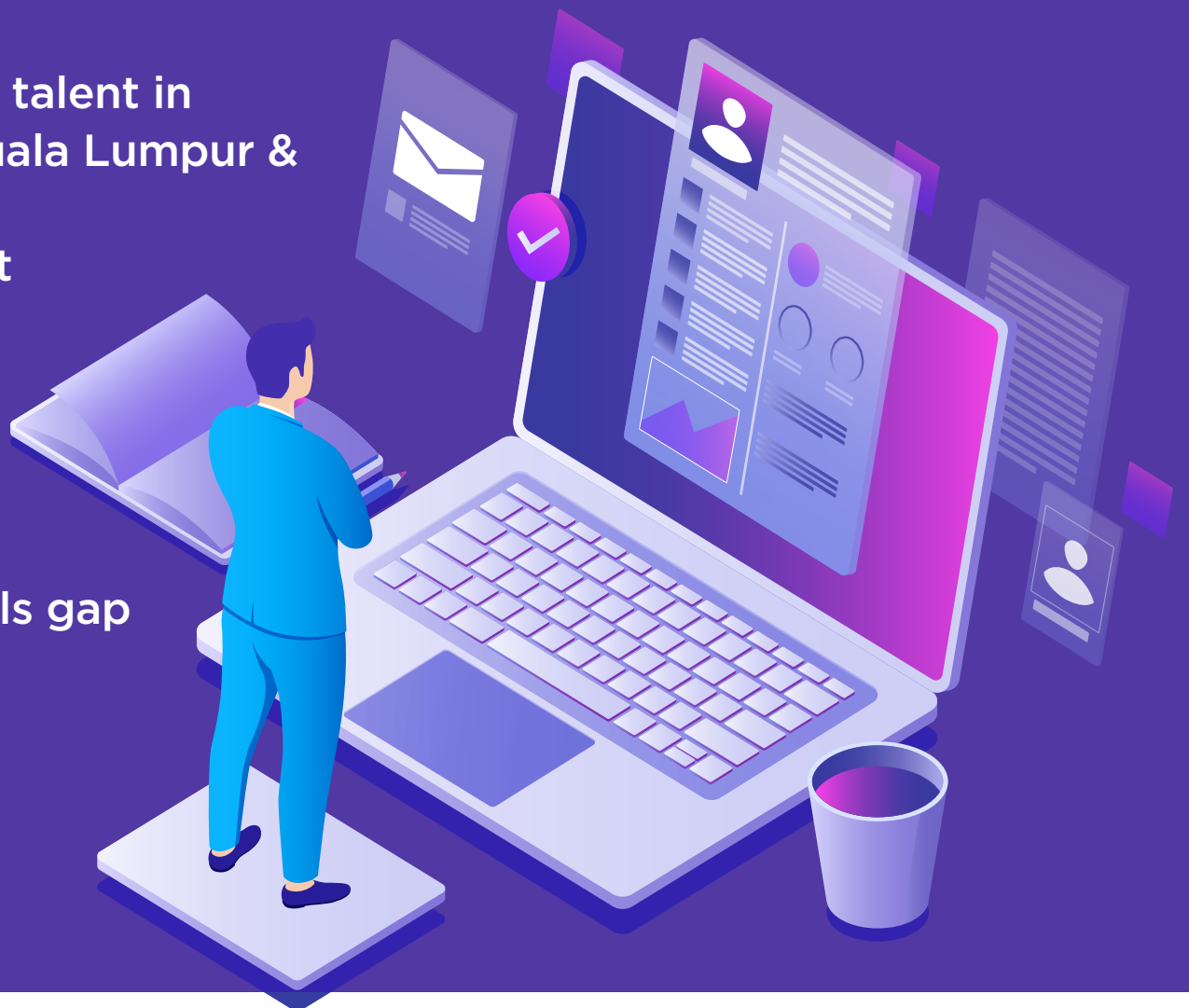
"IN A BID TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SOCIETY, AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING INITIATIVE HAS TO BE PUT FORWARD TO ENSURE THAT DIGITALISATION IS BEING ADOPTED BY ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY FOR A FAIR ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION AND EQUITABLE GROWTH."
– MAHADHIR AZIZ, CEO OF MDEC.

MDEC's MyDigitalWorkforce Work in Tech (MYWiT)

- Strives to help the Rakyat improve digital literacy
- Enable access to more high-paying jobs
- Facilitate the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as drivers of Malaysia's digital economy
- Introduced under Kumpulan Wang COVID-19, the subsidy programme involves a RM100 million fund from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to support MDEC's #MyDigitalWorkforce Movement
- Incentivise employers to hire unemployed Malaysians via training and salary subsidies

Case Study

Karuna (Sarawak) Enterprise Sdn Bhd, a Kuching-based creative design company, experienced the talent shortage first-hand when the company was ready to invest and expand its footprint.

Problem: Coding Languages in Demand

"We have faced difficulties in finding people with specific skill sets that are essential to our line of business, which include being well-versed in coding languages such as React Native, React JS, Next.js and Flutter."

- Jonus Ko, Business Development Manager of Karuna.

Testimonial

Goh Wei Ying, Computer Science-graduate from the international branch of Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak:

"Since I'm a fresh graduate, I don't have much working experience in IT-related fields except for being an intern in the IT department of a property company. I started looking for IT-related jobs after graduating on various job search platforms. There weren't many options as most of them are either not located in Kuching or expecting experienced programmers."

After successfully passing the interview with Karuna, Goh was introduced to MYWiT and its programmes which had enabled her to secure a job for at least 12 months and allowed her to gain more experience and knowledge.

To apply for MYWiT incentive, please visit **https://mdec.my/ mywit/**.

Making A Difference

Karuna was able to address the issues it had with hiring digital talents, utilising the upskilling and reskilling programmes recommended by MYWiT.

Sustainability – What Does It Mean to Me?

Written by Shuba Karun, Senior Manager of Environment Social and Governance (ESG) & Sustainability, MDEC.

YOU have probably seen an increasing number of remarks in the media along the lines of "we must build back better, greener, and fairer". While admirable statements, it does make me wonder about what it all means exactly for you and me and how we can truly make a difference individually.

In particular, I've been thinking a lot about how to reduce my personal carbon footprint through more sustainable living. More buzzwords, I'm afraid, but I didn't have to look very far for my inspiration to do this - my parents. For them, it's all about their mindset and attitude. Central to this is their lifestyle: they lead simple but rewarding lives where everything is valued and reused. They don't do this just to save money but because they believe that it is the right thing to do.

If I take an honest look at my lifestyle, I'm sure that I emulate some of their values. However, like me, I'm sure that many of my generation confuse wants and needs in our rush to buy the latest gadget or item that we simply must have as it is become "essential" to our lifestyle. Taking a quick look around my home, I will be the first to admit that I'm guilty of that!

So what's next you may ask? My personal sustainability journey will start with small steps, as I believe that these add up and can really make a difference. From today, I will make a personal pledge to green my daily actions to protect the environment.

This will range from simple things like switching off lights, fans and air conditioning when not needed; turning off the tap while cleaning my teeth, to reusing and recycling everything that I can, and asking myself if I really need this new gadget! I hope you will join me on this journey!

Definition of Sustainability | Brundtland Report

"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

MDEC & AFG Facilitate Funding Opportunities

Strategic Partnership to Help Malaysian Fintech Companies Access Potential Funding Facilitation through Investment and Acquisition.

MDEC, in collaboration with ASEAN Fintech Group (AFG), announced a strategic partnership to enhance initiatives aimed at scaling up Malaysian fintech companies. Their collaborative efforts will focus on three key areas, namely deal flows, fintech ecosystem support and joint amplification.

MDEC will curate deal flows and funnel potential Malaysian fintech companies to AFG. AFG, through its regional network, will explore funding facilitation opportunities for Malaysian Technology companies, especially Fintech start-ups, for potential investment and acquisition.

This synergistic partnership with MDEC will provide an opportunity for the AFG to propel start-ups and add value to the robust Malaysian fintech network through efficient capital provision, tech, infrastructure support, and an extensive network of key decision-makers and industry leaders from various sectors and companies.

"

"MALAYSIA PRESENTS A CONDUCIVE INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT, BACKED BY AN ABUNDANCE OF TALENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND A THRIVING START-UP ECOSYSTEM FILLED WITH HIGH-POTENTIAL IDEAS, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. WE HAVE A NUMBER OF MALAYSIAN FINTECH COMPANIES WHO FORM PARTS OF OUR NETWORK WHO HAVE NOT ONLY SEEN GROWTH BUT ARE IN THE MIDST OF GOING REGIONAL THROUGH THE AFG'S SUPPORT. WE SEE GREAT POTENTIAL IN MDEC'S PROGRAMMES WHICH IS WHY WE HAVE CHOSEN MALAYSIA AS OUR PREFERRED HUB TO EXPAND INTO THE ASEAN REGION."
- LAU KIN WAI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASEAN FINTECH GROUP.

ASEAN Fintech Group

- Founded in 2017
- Aims to create accretive value by digitising money and commerce flow across one of the fastest-growing fintech geo-markets in Asia
- Increases interoperability of current and future businesses by building an Integrated Fintech Value Chain through innovation, network and scale across four verticals; Payments, Lending / BNPL, Insurtech and Digital Wealth Management

Among the Malaysian fintech companies currently under AFG's roster includes Fatberry.com Malaysia's leading Insurtech Platform and BetterPay, a Payment Service Platform.

Fatberry.com

- Provides accessible and affordable insurance plans to Malaysians powered by AI data analytics
- Over 250,000 visitors monthly
- Users receive tailor-made solutions for their insurance needs anytime, anywhere

BetterPay (QlicknPay)

- Formerly known as QlicknPay
- Payment Service Platform
- Partnered with leading banks to help digitise businesses through advanced payment technology linked with core banking products

"

**WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THIS COLLABORATION WITH AFG AS WE STRIVE FORWARD WITH INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE AND SCALE-UP MALAYSIAN FINTECH COMPANIES. WORKING CLOSELY WITH FINTECH ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS, WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE PARTNERSHIP WILL CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THESE COMPANIES IN ADVANCING THEIR BUSINESS WITH ACCESS TO REGIONAL MARKETS AND FUNDING."
– MAHADHIR AZIZ, CEO OF MDEC.**

Funding Facilitation Programmes 2022

Funding Initiatives to Help Entrepreneurs Tide Over the Economic Challenges Posed by the Pandemic.

A. ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the sustainability of startups and tech companies in Malaysia. Companies especially with less than 3 years of operations are faced with various challenges tapping into funding facilities as banks will prioritise existing customers with track records. As such, an alternative avenue for funding and financing is necessary for them.

In response to this, MDEC has partnered with 14 Equity Crowdfunding (ECF) and Peer-to-Peer (P2P) platforms to help entrepreneurs tide the economic challenges and provide cash flow relief for micro, small & medium enterprises (MSME). MDEC will offer priority assessment to all applicants by screening your eligibility before submitting them to the selected ECF/P2P operators.

2021 Achievements

Total Applicants:
- 77 companies

Total Funding Request:
- USD 58.3mil

No of Companies Live/Pre-Live:
- 20 companies

Notable Companies Participated:
1. Govicle
2. Supplycart
3. Igotopia
4. GetSlurp
5. XTS Technologies
6. Evul

2022 Programme Details

Application Open:
7th March 2022

Closing Date:
30th April 2022

Process:
1. Submissions by companies via MDEC's GAIN platform by 30 April 2022
2. MDEC to conduct basic screening of companies that applied
3. MDEC will submit potential applicants to respective ECF & P2P partners

4. ECF and P2P operators will reach out to companies for due diligence process

Incentives for Eligible Companies:
1. Complimentary Startup Valuation for companies that have completed their onboarding process with selected platform partners
2. Listing incentive for companies to be onboarded the ECF platform
3. Marketing support and assistance for companies going pre-live/live

B. INVESTOR MATCHING PROGRAMME

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, getting through these uncertain times is a major worry for startups and access to investors is the biggest challenge that they will have to contend with. In response to this, MDEC is launching the Investor Matching programme to provide a platform for investors to seek potential investment and assist startups to fundraise during these tough times.

This initiative will provide a much-needed avenue of funding for many Malaysian-based startups and it has already signed on more than 60 investors to participate and support the Malaysian startup ecosystem.

2021 Achievements

Total Applicants:
• **108 companies**

Total Funding Request:
• **USD 98.4mil**

No of Companies Matched:
• **66 companies** (61% successful matches – increase from 37.5% in 2020)

Notable Companies Participated:
1. Curlec
2. CapBay
3. Food Market Hub
4. Policy Street
5. Money Match

2022 Programme Details

Application Open:
14th March 2022

Closing Date:
15th April 2022

Process:
1. Submissions by companies via MDEC's GAIN platform by 15 April 2022
2. MDEC to conduct basic screening, and match companies with investors based on funding stage and verticals/industry
3. Investors to shortlist companies that they are keen to connect for further discussion
4. MDEC to facilitate the introduction to VCs

C. FOUNDERS GRINDSTONE

Founders Grindstone empowers tech entrepreneurs to maximise their potential and focus on helping their fundraising journey. Entrepreneurs will receive first-hand coaching via intensive workshops conducted by professional partners from investors, venture capital, equity crowdfunding platform and legal firm. This programme will also equip founders with an understanding of regulatory and legal issues that they might face while raising funds.

2021 Achievements

Total Applicants (Batch 1-3):
- **143 companies** participated

FG Bootcamp:
- **25 companies** joined FG bootcamp
- **11 companies** pitched on the demo day

Top 3 winners:
AOne, Cult Creative, Petotum

Outcome:
1. The top 3 winners received scholarships to participate in Draper University's Virtual Entrepreneurship Programme.
2. Potential investment for the finalists through Draper's newly incepted microfund (subject to due diligence by the DSH team).

2022 Programme Details

FOUNDERS GRINDSTONE POCKET

Short refresher workshops on the basics of fundraising for early-stage startups and as a mean to engage with state agencies. Target for early-stage startups to tag along with state engagements.

FOUNDERS GRINDSTONE THEMATIC

More comprehensive and thorough batches of fundraising workshops based on companies sector/industry.

Application Open:
First week of March

Workshop:
Third – Fourth Week of March

FOUNDERS GRINDSTONE BOOTCAMP

Intensive bootcamp for a selected group of companies that will eventually end with a Demo Day judged by investor partners.

Application Open:
August 2022

Workshop:
September 2022

D. M&A PROGRAMME

The COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges and an unusual economic landscape for businesses and companies that are expected to pursue different strategic objectives. We are looking at Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) as a potential strategy for companies that are looking for opportunistic growth or strategic restructuring. This programme will act as a platform for SMEs to connect with corporate arms and investors in knowledge sharing as well as potential deals.

2021 Achievement

5 companies positioned for M&A

2022 Programme Details

Intensive M&A Workshop

Application Open:
Third week of March 2022

M&A Briefing Workshop:
April 2022

MDEC Fosters Synergies with Stakeholders

MDEC's Recent Endeavours.

Engagement with Melaka State Agencies and MSC Companies on Digital Investments

At the national level, the MyDIGITAL initiatives are carried out to transform Malaysia into a regional leader in the digital economy. A recent state engagement in Melaka on leveraging existing infrastructure and creating an ecosystem for a robust digital investment location.

Air Liquide Grand Opening

French multinational, Air Liquide, expanded its Digital Global Business Services operations in Malaysia, including Procurement, Digital, IT & HR services on top of being its finance hub and Smart Innovative Operations Centre here.
MDEC has assisted its expansion by providing building facilitation into the 1Powerhouse MSC location & foreign knowledge worker facilitation.

Visit to Aerodyne Group's Office in Cyberjaya

Aerodyne has proliferated from humble beginnings back in 2014 to become the largest drone service provider in the world, recognised during the Budget 2022 speech.
The group's calibre has always been at the forefront of the DroneTech industry's flight to success. It has voluntarily assisted the government with numerous initiatives and aligned its plans with the MyDIGITAL initiative.

Official Launch of DE x Futuremakers

Me.reka, in partnership with Standard Chartered Foundation, has officially launched the DE x Futuremakers programme, which aims to provide 500 scholarships for B40 youths seeking to upskill digitally. The scholarships are provided to B40 youths for an 8-week course, including a project placement to build technical skills and one-year career mentorship. Mahadhir Aziz, CEO of MDEC, officiated the launch.

Senangpay Is the Way to Go for Desa Balqis Beach Resort!

Online Payment Helped Boost the Number of Bookings.

LOCATED in Kuala Linggi Melaka, Desa Balqis Beach Resort has a concept of tropical resort-style architecture and traditional Malay design.

Despite the attraction, the resort was still using a manual system in their room bookings. Guests had to call in or come to their office to make a reservation, thus limiting their number of bookings per month.

That was not until July 2021 when the resort discovered an online payment gateway called *Senangpay*.

The resort started using *Senangpay* during the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restriction was still in place. The conveniences the online payment offers have helped boost its number of bookings as reservations can be made entirely through the platform.

It has also helped their staff by making their job much more manageable and convenient.

Senangpay is a vendor in the Shop Malaysia Online (SMO) campaign organised by MDEC. The Government introduced the SMO campaign under the Budget 2021 initiative to encourage online shopping.
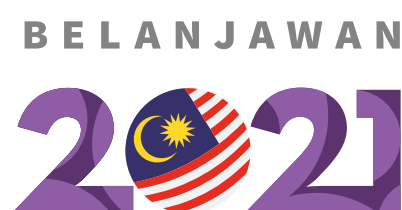
AI & Organisational Transformation

AI Is Playing an Increasingly Prominent Role in Helping Leaders Reach Their Organisation's Goals.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) has been the talk of the town in recent years. A report by **PwC** estimated that global GDP could grow by 14 per cent or US$15.7 trillion by 2030 as a result of AI. Closer to home, the ASEAN market is set to grow to US$5.2 trillion by 2025. The harvest is out there, but how do we reap it?

Early last year, HELP University launched its Centre for Industry Revolution 4.0 to raise public awareness of the importance of IR4.0 technologies, particularly on AI and Big Data and its future impact on society.

The effort to increase awareness on the topics was made possible through collaboration with its industry partners after signing a Memorandum of Agreement with Cybersecurity Malaysia on 6 October 2021.

MDEC also played a role in providing a larger context for the discussion on Industry Revolution 4.0, of which the university has been benefitted from the numerous training initiatives organised by MDEC with partners such as Microsoft, SAS and through the annual DTEX event.

What is Affecting AI Adoption in Malaysia

- Low emphasis on R&D
- Fewer degree holders compared to other ASEAN countries
- Lack of talent

Recently, HELP University, as a Premier Digital Tech Institution (PDTI), also launched the National Upskilling Program (NUP) for postgraduate programmes.

PDTIs are digital tech-focused tertiary institutions recognised by MDEC and industry stakeholders with a proven track record in producing high-quality graduates.

student behaviours for lecturer intervention.

The data requirements and cost, ranging in the millions of dollars, of training billion parameter AI models are prohibitive. However, making use of pre-trained models and "last-mile training" is a sustainable way forward.

Example of Automated Tasks Made Simpler With AI

- Recognising car number plates
- Identifying faces
- Mechanisation of routine cognitive tasks

In education, an over-reliance on automated systems gives rise to issues of trust, explainability and bias. Therefore, we have adopted the paradigm of augmentation, or assistance, where an AI does not replace decision-making but supplements it by recommendations. An example would be to flag at-risk

The Way Forward

AI must not be too complicated so that humankind can easily adapt

Familiarity with the system must not be taken out of human hands

It is not enough just to hire more computer scientists and software engineers

Requires deep awareness and education at all levels of society

This was adapted from an article written for MDEC by Dr Tang U-Liang, Head of School of Information and Communications Technology, HELP University.

www.mdec.my