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2025 REPORT

**OFFICE OF DEPUTY DEAN
(INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS)**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

2025



Provision of Expert Services for the Preparation of Nomination Documentation for the Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve (RHL) as an ASEAN Heritage Park

Project Leader

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Syamsul Herman Mohammad Afandi

Date

24 January 2025 - 17 October 2025

Venue

Rizab Hidupan Liar (RHL) Tengku Hassanal (605.52km²), Pahang

Project Summary

The successful nomination of Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve (THWR) as the 64th ASEAN Heritage Park on September 22, 2025, was the result of a strategic, expert-led initiative involving meticulous research, documentation, and collaboration among Universiti Putra Malaysia, PERHILITAN, and other national institutions. Led by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Syamsul Herman and his team, the nomination leveraged decades of scientific research and the comprehensive Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve Management Plan 2023–2032 to demonstrate the site's high conservation value and commitment to sustainable management. This designation not only affirms THWR's outstanding biological significance but also facilitates access to technical assistance, funding, and capacity-building programs. It promotes sustainable tourism through key attractions like the National Elephant Conservation Centre and Gunung Benom, boosts local economic opportunities via community-based tourism, supports ecosystem service valuation, and enhances social return on investment for local communities. Additionally, the reserve's conservation efforts align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, contributing to biodiversity protection, climate action, and Malaysia's international leadership in sustainability.

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ITEKAD PROGRAM BETWEEN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS UPM AND AMBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD

Project Leader

Prof. Dr. Rozanah Ab. Rahman

Date

01 April 2025 - 30 April 2026

Venue

School of Business and Economics (SBE UPM)

Project Summary

ITEKAD Program which is an umbrella program that has been established by Bank Negara Malaysia, with the aim of assisting low-income microentrepreneurs to strengthen their financial management towards generating sustainable income.

To support the urban farmers aligns with AmBank Islamic's sustainability agenda in relation to financial inclusion via social finance, thus creating impactful initiatives that will benefit the community.

Business training is a catalyst for community transformation. It reduces unemployment, empowers local leaders, and fosters entrepreneurship that strengthen both economic and social development.

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AgroMicro Community Empowerment

Project Leader

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mass Hareeza Ali @ Hamid

Date

01 April 2025 - 30 April 2026

Venue

Kg. Sungai Timun, Linggi, Negeri Sembilan

Project Summary

Serving as a mentor and guide in delivering information and guiding B40 entrepreneurs involved in this POME (Palm Oil Mill Effluent) enterprise, with the assistance of funding from Ambank Islamic to accelerate the process and effectiveness of related activities.

The agricultural POME soil enterprise involves the process of mixing topsoil and waste from oil palm trees as a fertilizer alternative to nourish crops. Entrepreneurial knowledge, ranging from idea improvement to making processes more effective and efficient, as well as digital marketing promotion, has been transferred to the entrepreneurs.

The entrepreneurs have become more efficient in operating this POME soil farming and have subsequently succeeded in mentoring and building careers for other village community members in running the same POME soil enterprise. The entrepreneurs appear confident and are applying digital platforms, specifically TikTok, to promote their products.

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High-Impact Knowledge Transfer and Community MSME Entrepreneur Empowerment Programme in Bogor Regency, Indonesia

**Project
Leader**

Dr. Najaa Abd. Mubin

Date

01 March 2025 - 31 July 2025

Venue

UMKM Kabupaten Bogor, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

**Project
Summary**

UPM's expertise plays a vital role in assisting rural MSME entrepreneurs who operate businesses based on the agricultural ecosystem in supporting the UPM Food Security Blueprint, including the production and marketing of food products such as coffee, tofu, foliage-based products, and chips, to address business sustainability and competitiveness challenges.

Through the Business Model Canvas (BMC) approach, entrepreneurs are guided to identify critical components in their business models, including raw material sources, production processes, value propositions, and marketing channels. Furthermore, guidance in digital marketing also helps entrepreneurs leverage technology to expand market reach and increase promotional effectiveness.

This strategic collaboration not only empowers rural MSMEs sustainably but also contributes directly to strengthening the local community's economy.

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Ecological and Environmental Data Collection and Big Data Platform Construction for Developing Countries

Project Leader

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lee Chin

Date

02 June 2025 - 31 March 2026

Venue

Guiyang, from 2 - 8 July 2025
Kunming, from 8 - 11 July 2025

Project Summary

A two-weeks training and site visits related to ecological and environmental data collection and big data platform were provided by the Guizhou Academy of Sciences for 25 scholars from 11 developing countries from 3rd – 16th July 2025. Five lecturers from UPM had attended this program.

The participants had learn about the environmental data collection and big data platform in China. This program was fully sponsored by the Government of People's Republic of China under the Projects of China Aid Training Program. This sponsorship included round-trip air tickets to Guiyang, accommodation, local transportation, and three daily meals, which is estimated around RMB20,000 per person. The total amount of sponsorship for five UPM scholars is RMB100,000 (or equivalent to RM59,000).

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Tea Time with a Halal Restaurant Entrepreneur in Bangkok

Project Leader

Dr. Shafie Sidek

Date

30 August 2025 - 30 August 2025

Venue

Entrepreneur Muslim Restaurant at Bangkok

Project Summary

The team engaged with the restaurant owner over an afternoon tea session. Discussions covered the restaurant's operations, daily sales, target customers, popular menu items, pricing, operating costs, and other relevant matters.

Dr. Najaa shared advice on marketing strategies and packaging approaches suitable for the restaurant's target customers. Dr. Shafie offered guidance on operating costs and appropriate pricing for the Muslim market in Bangkok.

This activity enhanced UPM's visibility in Bangkok and opened new perspectives for the halal restaurant, Nisreen, to improve its sales and further develop its business.

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A Desk Review of Independent Oil Palm Smallholders in Malaysia's Palm Oil Value Chain

Project Leader

Profesor Dr. Shaufique Fahmi Ahmad Sidique

Date

15 October 2025 - 15 August 2026

Venue

Hotel Istana , Kuala Lumpur & Socfindo North Sumatera Farm

Project Summary

The objective of this project is to conduct a comprehensive desk review of the role and position of independent oil palm smallholders within Malaysia's palm oil value chain. The study aims to analyse the structural composition of the national palm oil value chain and identify key stakeholders involved across the upstream, midstream, and downstream segments. It further seeks to examine how independent smallholders interact with various actors within this chain, including mills, dealers, and certification bodies. In addition, the review evaluates initiatives implemented by Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) that aim to enhance smallholder inclusion, traceability, and sustainability adoption in Malaysia's palm oil sector.

The project provides valuable insights for the palm oil industry by strengthening the understanding of how independent smallholders participate in Malaysia's palm oil value chain and the challenges they face in adapting to evolving sustainability governance. The findings support Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil in refining strategies and interventions aimed at improving smallholder inclusion, traceability, and certification uptake. For academia, the project enhances the research contribution of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in sustainable agribusiness and value chain analysis. It reinforces UPM's role as a trusted research partner that generates policy-relevant knowledge to support inclusive, transparent, and sustainable development of Malaysia's palm oil sector.

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Market Analysis and Economic Feasibility of Cultured Meat in Malaysia

Project Leader

Profesor Dr. Shaufique Fahmi Ahmad Sidique

Date

15 February 2025 - 18 August 2026

Venue

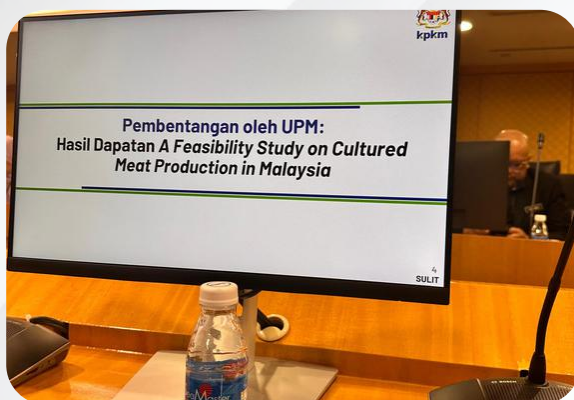
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Malaysia

Project Summary

The objective of this project is to evaluate the market potential and economic feasibility of cultured meat in Malaysia. The study aims to analyse consumer demand, market readiness, and potential industry opportunities associated with the development of cultured meat products. It also examines economic implications, including production costs, value chain prospects, and regulatory considerations, to support strategic planning and policy development by Kementerian Ekonomi.

The project provides strategic insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders regarding the viability of cultured meat as an emerging food innovation in Malaysia. The findings assist Ministry of Economy in shaping forward-looking policies related to food security, alternative proteins, and sustainable food systems. For Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), the project strengthens its role as a key research partner in national policy studies and reinforces its contribution to evidence-based decision-making in Malaysia's agri-food sector.

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ASNAF ENTREPRENEUR NETWORKING PROJECT FOR BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY

Project Leader

Mdm. Manisah Othman

Date

01 April 2025 - 30 April 2026

Venue

Kg. Paya Rambutan, Ulu Lepar, Kuantan

Project Summary

This programme aims to enhance the productivity and sustainability of agricultural activities among participants by providing comprehensive training in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and marketing. It includes knowledge transfer on fertigation techniques, IoT application, land and system preparation, as well as business skills such as the Business Model Canvas, financial management, digital marketing, and operations. Through wider market networking and improved business management practices, the initiative seeks to increase participants' income, uplift their standard of living, and support consistent marketing of agricultural products. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to ensure effective application of the training provided by UPM experts.

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MACRO AGROPRENEUR EMPOWERMENT PROJECT FOR RURAL ASNAF COMMUNITIES

Project Leader

Datin Dr. Yusniyati Yusri

Date

01 April 2025 - 30 March 2026

Venue

Kg Paya Rambutan, Ulu Lepar, Kuantan

Project Summary

This initiative aims to equip participants, particularly asnaf, with systematic entrepreneurship training focused on marketing, financial management, and proper record-keeping of agricultural outputs. By strengthening their understanding of business operations and financial planning, the programme fosters the community's ability to manage and grow their agricultural enterprises in a more organised and effective manner. Ultimately, it supports participants in increasing their income and improving their standard of living through more productive and sustainable agricultural practices, while helping them market and manage their produce efficiently to enhance household economic resilience.

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ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF ASNAF THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKETING IN KG PAYA RAMBUTAN, ULU LEPAR, GAMBANG

**Project
Leader**

Mdm. Manisah Othman

Date

01 July 2025 - 30 June 2026

Venue

Kg. Paya Rambutan, Ulu Lepar, Gambang

**Project
Summary**

The asnaf community in Kampung Paya Rambutan, Ulu Lepar, Gambang, Pahang faces various socioeconomic challenges that make it difficult for them to break out of the cycle of poverty. Most of them rely on irregular work such as manual labour and small village jobs that provide low and unstable income. Their dependence on financial aid from the government and NGOs is also insufficient to ensure long-term livelihood sustainability.

Although this community has the potential to generate income through their own economic activities, many still lack the knowledge and skills needed to run a structured and competitive business. The absence of guidance in entrepreneurial areas such as business management, financial management, and marketing strategies makes it difficult for them to maximise the results of their efforts and penetrate wider markets. In addition, limited access to market networks, branding techniques, and effective promotion has hindered the growth of their business ventures and reduced their potential returns. This directly restricts their opportunities to increase income sustainably.

Therefore, this project aims to empower the asnaf community through training and guidance in entrepreneurship and business product marketing. This approach will help them understand basic business concepts, develop suitable business models, plan marketing strategies, and build confidence to manage and expand their small businesses. The main goal of the project is to produce independent, resilient asnaf entrepreneurs who are capable of generating sustainable income, thereby improving their standard of living and reducing dependence on external assistance.

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FINANCIAL REPORTING EMPOWERMENT PROJECT FOR AGRO-ENTREPRENEURS

Project Leader

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mazlina Mustapha

Date

01 April 2025 - 30 April 2026

Venue

Kg. Paya Rambutan, Ulu Lepar, Gambang

Project Summary

Technical knowledge regarding cultivation already exists among the participants; however, the aspects of recording agricultural activities and crop sales still need to be strengthened.

This project has assisted in increasing participants' income, enabling them to generate higher earnings through agricultural produce and value-added products. Participants also acquired business skills, where they learned the basics of financial management, account recording, and profit and loss calculation.

The overall program has provided participants with the knowledge to determine how return on investment is achieved, and these skills are highly useful for planning and organizing their business strategies to ensure the future sustainability of their enterprises.

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FINANCIAL LITERACY PROJECT FOR MICRO AGRO-ENTREPRENEURS IN URBAN ASNAF COMMUNITIES

Project Leader

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmad Fahmi Sheikh Hassan

Date

01 April 2025 - 30 April 2026

Venue

Kompleks Jabatan Pertanian Serdang, Selangor

Project Summary

Throughout their participation in the UPM iTekad Agropreneur program, participants have demonstrated significant improvements in knowledge, skills, and self-management capabilities. Among the knowledge gained is the ability to be self-reliant in managing agricultural and business activities, including making decisions more confidently and proactively. Additionally, participants learned systematic customer acquisition strategies and enhanced their marketing skills to broaden the reach of their products.

The program also assisted participants in building strong networks, both with customers and among fellow agropreneurs. These networks not only open opportunities for collaboration but also serve as a platform for sharing experiences and support in facing business challenges.

However, participants also faced several challenges during the project's implementation. These included crop damage due to unpredictable weather factors, which had a direct impact on agricultural yields. Furthermore, damage to the local water supply system disrupted the irrigation of crops. These challenges are uncontrollable factors that require participants to be more adaptive and prepared with risk mitigation plans in the future.

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