



UNIVERSITI
TEKNOLOGI
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Fakulti
Pengurusan
dan Perniagaan

SOCIO ENVIRONMENT COMPENDIUM

VOLUME 3(1), 2020

eISSN: 2636-9656

2020

-SOCENTIUM-
keeping you informed

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND
MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

RESEARCH REVIEW

EDITOR: DR. NUR ZAHIDAH BAHRUDIN

GRANTS

A Qualitative Study of Factors Influencing Employee Ecological Behaviour of Academics in Higher Education

Funding Organisation: FRGS

Amount: **RM87,000**

Project duration: 01/09/2019 - 31/08/2021

Development of Virtual Lifestyle Management Program for Promoting Health Behavior Changes

Funding Organisation: PRGS

Amount: **RM113,500**

Project duration: 01/01/2019 - 31/12/2020

Profiling and Segmentation of Urban Poor Children for Better Quality of Life

Funding Organisation: FRGS

Amount: **RM83,950**

Project duration: 01/09/2019 - 31/08/2021

Malaysia Sustainable University Campus Network/MySun

Funding Organisation: Erasmus & European Union

Amount: **RM374,141.90**

Project duration: 15/1/2020 - 14/1/2023

MALAYSIA SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS NETWORK/MySun

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia's commitment to addressing sustainability, energy access and efficiency, and climate change issues is evident by its allegiance to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To promote and realize the enacted laws and guidelines on sustainability and energy efficiency, a bottom-up approach that focused on local communities such Higher Education Institutions is adopted. However, Malaysian HEIs have no guidelines on improving their campuses' sustainability or energy efficiency. The inculcation of sustainability in HEI campuses in Malaysia through a national platform is urgently needed to ensure impactful national and local outcomes from future sustainability and energy efficiency activities. The European Union has funded an initiative called Malaysia Sustainable University Campus Network (MySun) for this purpose. Eight Malaysian and three EU universities and the Malaysian MOE are involved in this initiative. The desired project outcomes are firstly to build the human capacities in university campuses' sustainability and energy efficiency in Malaysia and secondly to develop a structure that promote a culture of sustainable HEI campuses in the Malaysian HE system. Eight work packages that span from 2020 to 2023 are planned for implementation. Regrettably, project progress is slow due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: European Union, Malaysia, Energy Efficiency, Sustainability, Higher Education Institutions



1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability, energy access and efficiency, and climate change have been part of the world's zeitgeist since 1992. After Malaysia and 177 other nations signed the Agenda 21 action plan in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, global awareness at all levels of society and governmental mitigating measures of sustainability issues started increasing. Yet, the subsequent slow and unsatisfactory progress led to a global recommitment in 2015 of an expanded agenda (UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development). Among the agenda's seventeen Sustainable Development Goals are improving access to affordable and clean energy, increasing energy efficiency, promoting sustainable growth and practices in communities, responsible consumption and production of resources, plus mitigating and adapting to climate change.

This is realized by the passing and promotion of new laws and guidelines for sustainability, and even financial incentives. It was intended that a bottom-up implementation of the agenda that begins with local communities would yield collective outcomes that impact the nation. A significantly influential community is the higher education institutions (HEIs). Their traditional roles of pioneering specific fields of study in relevant areas (energy, environmental management, climate change etc.) should expand to real application of measures that promote and create cultures of sustainability on their campuses. A sustainable university model can be achieved if all HEI communities are familiar with and actively involved in these measures (Velazquez et al., 2006).

Successive Malaysian governments see the importance of sustainable development, especially the need for good energy and environmental practices. The Malaysian economy has expanded from her manufacturing and resource extraction-based model to include services and higher-value-added activities. The demand for sustainable supply of energy has increased in tandem. Thus, her economic development's dependence on finite natural resources, namely fossil fuels, for energy generation must be reduced. The diversification of energy resources is needed to sustain the energy sector and ensure the security and reliability of the energy supply.

Numerous laws and programs that promote the efficient use of energy and renewable energy, green building standards etc., have been enacted in Malaysia such as the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for 2016-2025. Most initiatives are aimed at the industrial sector. Despite initiatives that focus on government buildings, Malaysian HEIs have no guidelines on improving their campuses' sustainability and energy efficiency. The non-existent common sustainability and energy efficiency framework for HEIs has resulted in isolated measures and poor coordination and awareness in HEI campuses in addressing these issues. Therefore, the development of a sustainability framework in HEI campuses in Malaysia through national platform is urgently needed to ensure impactful local and national outcomes from future sustainability and energy efficiency activities.

2. MALAYSIA SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS NETWORK (MySun)

The European Union (EU) approached the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) and several Malaysian universities to help create the beginnings of a common platform for sustainability and energy efficiency in HEIs through the Malaysia Sustainable University Campus Network (MySun). Eight Malaysian and three EU universities and the Malaysian MOE are involved in this initiative (See Table 1). Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) was recommended by University of Alicante to participate as a project member due to its accomplishment in a recently completed EU-funded Erasmus grant project. Each member is represented by several employees possessing certain competencies relevant to the project. UiTM is represented by five employees seconded from the Faculty of Business Studies and the Bursar.

MySun is a National Structural Project in Malaysia which meets EU's Region 6 (Asia) priority of "Governances, strategic planning, and management of higher education institutions" under Category 2 – Improving management and operation of HEIs. Thus, MySun has two main objectives. The first is to build the human capacities in university campuses' sustainability and energy efficiency in Malaysia. The second is to develop a structure and promote a culture of sustainable HEI campuses in the Malaysian HE system through the establishment of the MySun Network and the delivery of a pilot Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on sustainability in HEI campuses.

2.1 MySun PROJECT ACTIVITIES

MySun activities are founded upon 4 pillars namely analysis and training, institutional strengthening, national-level strategic development, and visibility, quality, and management. Its first activity is the National Structural Project in Malaysia or MySun project that involves the Malaysian MOE, and eight Malaysian and three EU universities. The EU provides the funding for this project amounting to EUR945,589.00 and UiTM was awarded EUR69,941.00. The project expenses are strictly monitored and audited by EU. This project will run for four years from February 2020 to January 2023.

The MySun project (and later the Network) will directly target and address the needs of the stakeholders of Malaysian universities. These stakeholders are (1) HEI staff from Sustainability Offices (or similar entities) & related academic staff, (2) HEI Higher Management, (3) other HEI staff (academic, technical, administrative, and management) not directly involved in the Sustainability Offices & students, and (4) external stakeholders (graduates, local communities, industry, local/regional/national government, and other HEIs).

Having had previous experience in EU-funded projects and developing MOOCs, and strong support to promote campus sustainability, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is the main project manager for the Malaysian universities. The project management function is shared with University of Alicante, Spain. Eight work packages (WPs) of the project are shared among the universities of the project. The WPs match the pool of expertise in each university's project team. Each WP is assigned to a pair of universities, or in some cases the Malaysian MOE, to be managed (Table 2). The Malaysian universities were each assigned several implementations tasks relevant to the WPs. The EU universities are responsible for supporting the implementation tasks of the Malaysian universities and MOE.

The Malaysian MOE is involved in the project WPs through its support of policies coordination, activity promotions, and additional expertise provision to Training of Trainers (TOTs) (WP2), the pilot MOOC (WP3), and National Workshops (WP5). Its contributions will help ensure the relevance of the policy white paper (WP5). UiTM is to manage the Quality Control Work Package (WP7) with UUM.

The MySun project will contribute to improving management and operations of HEIs most notably through the creation or modernization of the sustainability Offices at the Malaysian HEI campuses. These Offices are to be equipped and assigned staff trained through the project TOT workshops, replication seminars, and/or the MySun pilot MOOC on Campus Sustainability. The Offices will provide guidance and support to their institutions for the better management of sustainability issues such as energy efficiency, waste management, etc. They will organize campus sustainability campaigns to raise awareness among the campus population, and will support the management of the HEI through the development of the Campus Sustainability Plans based on needs and recommendation identified in the WPI analysis and benchmarking reports.

TABLE 1: PROJECT MEMBERS

Malaysian project members	EU project members
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	University of Alicante, Spain (UA)
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	FH Joanneum, Austria (FHJ)
Multimedia University (MMU)	University of Genoa, Italy (UNIGE)
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	
Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)	
Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)	
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	
Ministry of Education (MOE)	

MOE Malaysia's active participation and the project's meeting of the MOE's identified needs will ensure the impacts of the project results relevant to the Malaysian Higher Education System.

The Policy White Paper, produced because of the analysis and benchmarking done in WP1 and the discussions held at local and national levels through local roundtables and first national conference (WP5), will provide the basis for future policy reform regarding sustainability and energy efficiency in Malaysian HEI campuses. The creation of the MySun Sustainable Campus Network, supported by the organization of two national conferences and workshops, will also provide a platform for cooperation between HEIs and other stakeholders at the national level.

TABLE 2: MANAGERS OF WORK PACKAGES

Work Package	Work Package Focus	Management of Work Package
WP1	Analysis of Sustainability Practices at University Campuses	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Multimedia University (MMU)
WP2	Capacity Building	University of Alicante, Spain (UA) Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
WP3	Sustainable Campus MOOC	FH Joanneum, Austria (FHJ) Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)
WP4	Institutional Strengthening	University of Genoa, Italy (UNIGE) Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)
WP5	Networking for Strategic Development	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Ministry of Education (MOE)
WP6	Dissemination and Sustainability	Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) University of Alicante, Spain (UA)
WP7	Quality Control	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
WP8	Project Management	University of Alicante, Spain (UA) Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

REFERENCES

Velazquez, L. et al. (2006). Sustainable university: what can be the matter? Journal of Cleaner Production, 14, 810-819. Detailed Project Description: Malaysia Sustainable University Campus Network / MySun. Working Paper submitted to EU.



2.2 PROJECT PROGRESS

MySun activities started with a kick-off meeting at University of Alicante, Spain. The purpose is to synchronize the objectives amongst members, and to plan and organize resources for specific activities. Due to travel restrictions, University of Genoa attended the meeting online. The national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia has hindered and slowed progress. However, the project has managed to mitigate the inconveniences of social distancing and gathering regulations by optimizing the use of online communications. Currently, the project is completing WP1, a collaboration between UTM and MMU, and each member has specific assignments to assist the task accomplishment. The team is confident of achieving the desired outcomes despite these challenges.

