

REPORT

STUDY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SARAWAK INDUSTRIAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INFORMATION CENTRE (SIEIC)

Prepared for:
Ministry of Industrial Development
Sarawak

Prepared by:
Associate Professor Dr. Abdul Rahman Deen
Dr. Jamil Hamali
Associate Professor Iris Syawe Seh Ling
Associate Professor Wee Chong Hui
Encik Sulzari Mohamed
Encik Gluma Saban

(Lecturers of MARA University of Technology Samarahan Campus)

July 2000

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1. INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century will see an intense demand for information and knowledge. Trade liberalisation will offer expanding markets opportunities only to be reaped with market intelligence in the knowledge economy. Even businesses confined within national boundaries will need information to respond adequately to foreign competition. Besides serving as inputs to the business, industrial and entrepreneurial community, information and knowledge will also be the end-products for the increasingly sophisticated consuming public. Recognising the challenges of the new millennium, the Ministry of Industrial Development, Sarawak (MID) established the Sarawak Industrial and Entrepreneurial Information Centre (SIEIC) way back in 1995 (see Appendix 1 on Objectives, Functions, Activities and Facilities of SIEIC).

The socio-economic and political scenario has changed drastically since 1995. The accelerated development of information technology (IT) has brought forth new opportunities as well as threats. Inter-governmental negotiations in the World Trade Organisation and various economic groupings are already in place. They will impinge on the Malaysian economy in general and the Sarawak economy in particular. The Asian financial crisis in 1997 and the ensuing economic recession have impacted on the local community. Malaysia's foreign exchange control and attempts at financial and banking restructuring thereafter further changes the business and investment climate. Above all is the resource constraint in achieving aspired objectives and targets.

Once again, MID aptly responds to the changing environment. With its inherent drive to play an effective role in meeting the requirements of the business public and manufacturing community, MID consulted *Universiti Teknologi MARA* (UiTM) *Kampus Samarahan* on SIEIC. The objectives of the exercise are:

- To evaluate the relevance, role and effective utilisation of the Centre.
- To identify users of the Centre and suggest how to create an awareness of the Centre amongst them.
- To propose alternative strategies for managing the Centre.
- To propose relevant on-going activities for the Centre in order to optimise the utilisation of the Centre.