

**NCIA COLLABORATES WITH HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES IN PENANG TO DEVELOP
HIGH-VALUE TALENT ECOSYSTEM**

*Creation of New Job Opportunities in Software and IR4.0 System Engineering
for High Technology Industries*

Penang, 15 October - The strategic partnership between the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) and the Penang State Government has given birth to a high-value talent ecosystem that will boost Penang's position as a world class regional technology hub and reinforce the development of highly skilled local talent in various high end technology related areas.

"In collaboration with the Penang State and Federal governments, NCIA is continuously enhancing Penang's attractiveness to investors in the Electronic and Electrical (E&E) and the Manufacturing and Engineering (M&E) sectors as we continue to strengthen our position as a leader in the region for advanced technology, high value talent and technology hub," said YAB Tuan Chow Kon Yeow, Chief Minister of Penang.

"With more than 300 multinational companies already having established operations in Penang, there is an inherent need for more high skilled talent to address the demand from the industry here. We are fortunate that Penang has an abundant supply of fresh graduates that the industry can tap into. Our position as the Silicon Valley of the East can be further strengthened by upskilling and enhancing the quality of our graduates through the initiatives being introduced by NCIA. I am indeed excited to see the results of these initiatives in the coming future," he added.

In an effort to build a strong and sustainable ecosystem in relation to Penang's Industrial and economic landscape, NCIA is establishing a technology and innovation hub called NCER Technology Innovation Centre (NTIC).

NTIC is a newly developed programme under the NCER "Single Campus" initiative that focuses on activities related to research, design, technology, innovation and commercialisation (R&D&T&I&C). The "Single Campus" concept promotes collaboration and cooperation between key manufacturing areas in Penang, Kedah and Perak through the facilitation by NTIC while positioning Penang as the catalyst hub focused on technology and innovation. This hub will

provide services and facilities for product innovation, linkages with local & international experts, local talent development, design and consultancy and a one-stop solution provider management system.

NTIC will serve as a platform for Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Local Large Companies (LLCs), Multinational Companies (MNCs), technocrats and young entrepreneurs, as well as start-up companies to conduct high value-added activities in the NCER.

NCIA is currently working closely with the Malaysian Semiconductor Industry Association (MSIA), Electrical Electronics Production Nexus (EEPN) as well as E&E industry players in developing programmes for Centre of Excellence (CoE) development, technical community programmes, SME and LLC value chain ecosystem development, Intellectual Property (IP) development and Advanced Technology Meister Programme (ATMP) for local talent development.

Using a "quadruple helix" approach to drive innovative and sustainable economic development, NTIC will focus on five core-enabler sectors; Electrical and Electronics (E&E), Machinery and Equipment (M&E), Medical Equipment and Devices, Aerospace and Agri-Technology.

This initiative (NTIC) aligns with the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2021-2025; as the key enablers for Skills and Talent Enhancement through ATMP.

ATMP aims to encourage the development of local high skilled talents through certificate and module endorsement programmes with joint development between industry and academia based on industry needs and talent demand.

Through NTIC, NCIA is collaborating with University Sains Malaysia (USM) and Collaborative Research in Engineering, Science and Technology Centre (CREST). This collaboration will see the development of high-skilled local talents to meet the demands of the industries in Penang as well as in the NCER.

With the signing of a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) between NCIA and USM, a programme has been launched to enhance talents' marketability by developing their IR4.0 related knowledge and skills that are highly sought after by the industry. The programme, coined *PreX* or Professional Excellence Programme is developed by combining academic and industry inputs on industry needs & expectations, industry professional assessment and employability.

The programme is created to support the growth and demand of IR4.0 system engineering in analytics & sustainability for the adoption of the nine pillars of IR4.0 by the industry. The industry players that will participate in the programme are Sophic Automation Sdn Bhd, Elliance Sdn Bhd and Miyazu Malaysia Sdn Bhd. *PreX* is aligned to the ATMP initiative under NTIC.

The MOC with CREST, on the other hand, will see collaborations with world renowned multinational companies such as Intel Microelectronics (M) Sdn Bhd and Motorola Solutions (M) Sdn Bhd, and with local technology companies such as Orionplex Sdn Bhd, Exiatec Technology Sdn Bhd and Sensoft Technologies Sdn Bhd. USM will be the upskilling institution to create high-skilled talents in software engineering disciplines to support the demand from industry players in Penang as well as within the NCER.

The Engineering Software Talent Programme (EnSofT) aims to address the engineering software talent gap in the fields of embedded system, android applications and embedded android operating system. EnSofT will be a catalyst to other types of high-end training programmes to generate industry-relevant talents that meet current and upcoming market demands.

This synergistic joint effort between NCIA and CREST, together with the academia and industry players will be a pilot programme for 2021 and EnSofT will be supported under the NCER Talent Enhancement Programme (NTEP).

NTEP is one of NCER's human capital incentive programmes that is meant to encourage companies to employ fresh graduates and provide them with adequate training. The incentive is also tailored to boost the employability of our local graduates, retrenched workers, contract workers, part-time workers and graduate trainees by providing them with job opportunities while ensuring a skilled workforce which matches the industry needs within NCER. Cumulatively since the programme was launched, a total of 9,188 participants have benefited from the programme.

Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John, Chief Executive of NCIA in reaffirming NCIA's role in providing a viable ecosystem said, "Collaborations with the academia and industry players such as what we just witnessed today will further grow Penang into a high-income and highly developed state as well as help it recover quickly from the pandemic as more job opportunities especially in software engineering are created.

These collaborative programmes will also see an increase in quality of talent that can further contribute to the region's high-skilled work force".

UST Global (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (UST Global), a multinational Global Business Services (GBS) company is planning to increase its investments in Penang as part of its growth strategy. Located in Bayan Lepas, UST Global has been an integral part of Penang's industrial ecosystem since 2011. The company is a MSC status company that has been providing high value jobs in IR4.0 related areas. Through NTEP, UST Global will provide new job opportunities to 70 graduates in the areas of software and hardware engineering as well as product development, infrastructure and system engineering.

Continuing this upward trend of economic activity in Penang, is one of the island state's pioneering multi-national companies, one of the eight Samurais, TF AMD Microelectronics (Penang) Sdn Bhd (formerly known as Advanced Micro Devices Export Sdn Bhd) located in Bayan Lepas. The company has called Penang home since 1972 and has just received a Letter of Award from NCIA for its JomKerja@NCER application to hire 840 new local employees comprising of 35 technicians and 805 manufacturing specialists in semiconductor assembly. This is a testament that the manufacturing industry and business markets are all confident with Penang's ability to rebound from its current post pandemic situation.

JomKerja@NCER is part of NCIA's fast-track strategic intervention programme implemented to support companies and businesses that are exploring to employ local human resources, investing and expanding in NCER during this post pandemic period. The participating companies are given human capital incentives and access to a varied talent pool comprising fresh graduates, youths, female personnel and retrenched experienced workers to meet their operational needs. Since its inception in 2020, JomKerja@NCER has attracted over 3,400 participants with more than 70 companies participating in the programme in Penang.

The opportunities accord better quality of life and ensure a skilled workforce that matches industry needs within NCER. Through this programme, companies are encouraged to hire local talents who will receive high quality on-the-job skills training and soft skills trainings to enhance their competency.

In relation to Penang, since its inception in 2020, JomKerja @NCER has attracted over 3,400 applicants with more than 70 companies participating in the programme. The NTEP having been established in 2019, on the other hand, has created more than 16,500 job opportunities with more than 45 participating companies in the island state.

It is important to note that NCIA has helped attract a total of RM8.56 billion of approved investments and created a total of 5,155 approved job creation to date for 2021. NCIA has in fact already exceeded its target of RM7.2B of 2021 approved investments. As for job creation, NCIA is on track to meet the 8,644 approved job creation targeted for this year.

“The NTEP and JomKerja@NCER are just two of the various rakyat centric human capital programmes that are a strategic element in the NCER Strategic Development Plan or SDP 2021-2025. The creation of these high-skilled job opportunities in high-value industries in Penang builds the foundation of NCIA’s efforts in the call to develop a ‘Prosperous, Inclusive, Sustainable Malaysia’ and improve the wellbeing of the rakyat,” said Datuk Seri Issace.

In acknowledging the efforts of the Federal Government post pandemic, Datuk Seri Isaac explained that the initiatives of NCIA are in direct alignment with the 12th Malaysia Plan, 2021-2025. “Resonating with the themes of the Twelfth Plan, NCIA will continue to pursue high quality investments and implement holistic human capital programmes in Penang to restore the wellbeing and prosperity of the rakyat especially the urban poor by increasing their purchasing power, narrowing existing socioeconomic disparities and ensuring sustainable livelihoods.”

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

About NCIA

The Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) is a regional development authority responsible for establishing directions, devising policies and strategies related to the socioeconomic development of the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER). Incorporated in June 2008 under the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority Act 2008 (Act 687), NCER encompasses the four northern states of Kedah, Penang, Perak and Perlis in Peninsular Malaysia. NCIA’s Chief Executive is Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John.

NCIA drives the growth of NCER towards becoming an excellent economic region while catalysing and implementing high value-added development programmes in six (6) economic clusters: Manufacturing, Agribusiness, Petrochemical, Mining, Green Economy and Services (Inc. Tourism; Logistics and Connectivity; and Digital Economy).

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