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Digitalising for the benefit of all

IT is only right that Sarawak's digital transformation must be attributed to our Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg. After all many of the strategic, futuristic and pragmatic initiatives began with him and implemented according to his directives.

Among the first steps was the International ICT Infrastructure and Digital Economy Conference Sarawak (IDECS) held in April 2017 when eight initiatives were

identified, namely Development Bank of Sarawak (DBOS), Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA), Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), ICT infrastructure, Digital Village, e-Learning, Data Hosting and Big Data, and Digital Economy Labs.

To keep the momentum going, the Sarawak government launched a number of digital services via mobile apps to provide convenience to the public.

On top of that, two mobile apps were launched, namely Sarawak Gov and e-wallet Sarawak Pay – now known as S Pay Global.

The state's digital economy initiatives have proven to be successful in increasing the economic development of Sarawak through the transformation of several sectors, including agriculture, e-commerce, financial technology, digital government, smart cities, smart tourism, and many more.

Sarawak's digital economy agenda

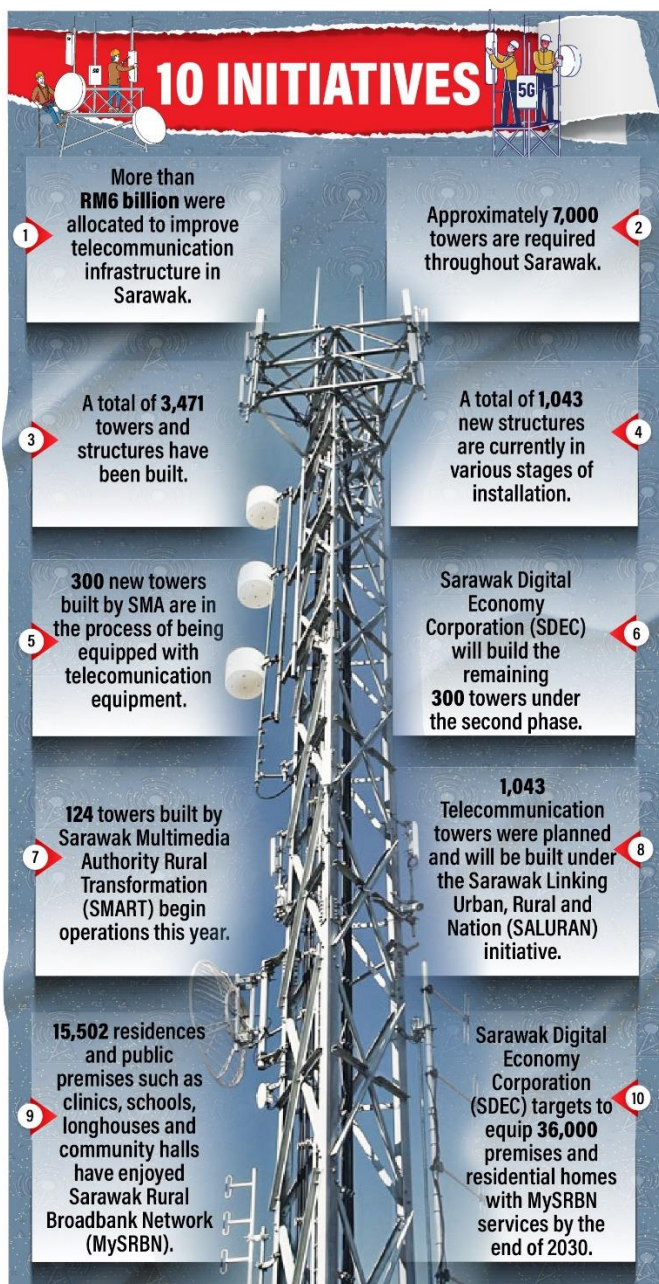


Dr Zaidi Razak

SMA general manager Dr Zaidi Razak highlighted that since the state government had embarked on the digital economy initiative prior to the pandemic, it had proven to be crucial when COVID-19 hit.

“There has been a high participation from Sarawakians in online businesses after the Premier introduced digital economy before the pandemic.”

He said it was the state government’s aspiration to see all Sarawakians, regardless where they live, to have equal access to good quality telecommunication services and SMA had been tasked to monitor telecommunication providers in implementing the initiatives aimed at bridging the digital gap between rural and urban areas.



Dr Zaidi said digital transformation was crucial as it would create huge job opportunity and social well-being particularly in high skilled and semi-skilled jobs, and access to the internet.

Through digital transformation, the Sarawak Government will be able to provide more efficient, improved and secured online services to the businesses and the people.

Dr Zaidi said there was a strong need for Sarawak to address its digital readiness to maximise digital values, otherwise it would not get the chance to capitalise the benefit of the global digitalisation which has a huge population of over 8 billion people.

However, he said that in order for Sarawak to have a good telecommunication services, it would take some time for the government to implement the various telecommunication infrastructures.

Digital economy benefits all sectors of society



Professor Jack 'Jagdutt' Singh

SMA chief scientist and chief advisor Professor Jack 'Jagdutt' Singh said digital economy as a whole was not just about the economy itself, but also benefitted society.

“Digital transformation is crucial as it would create huge job opportunities and social wellbeing, particularly in the high skilled and semi-skilled jobs, and access to the Internet.

“And with access to the Internet, they can start doing business of their own, which will raise the growth in household income.”

He stressed that digital economy would transform the business sector, for instance, through new business models in order to access the global market.

Sarawak becoming a developed state by 2030



Professor Ir Dr Al-Khalid Othman

Deputy chief scientist and deputy chief advisor to the state government on digital economy, Professor Ir Dr Al-Khalid Othman said in order to attain developed status by 2030, the Sarawak government had adopted digital economy through the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy (PCDS) 2030 blueprint.

“In order for Sarawak to achieve developed status, it must focus on training its workforce in Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).”

“As technology changes, it requires a holistic, inclusive and sustainable framework and model for the digital skill talent development ecosystem. Therefore, lifelong learning to re-skill the current labour force for future Industry Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0) manpower requirements is vital.”

He stressed that digital skill talent management also required a dynamic or flexible model of support system that focused on the target group.

As such organisations needed to provide more training involving technology to help employees improve their skills to adapt to the new work environment, while maintaining productivity. “We have to continue to invest in developing our own digital, technical and creative talents in our endeavour to attain (IR4.0) status.”

Life made easier



Nurul Husna Shamsudin

NURUL HUSNA SHAMSUDIN, 30, Malay, Kuching, (GrabFood Rider)

– I see GrabFood delivery as an online platform that eases the business of buying and selling for customers in my area. This platform also offers career opportunities for those who have just finished school, those who lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and others.



Sandra Trinata

SANDRA TRINATA, 35, Bldayuh, Serikin, Bau, (Rattan Handicraft Seller)

-Selling rattan handicraft on Facebook is very easy, especially with free wireless fidelity (wifi) installation using Sarawak Rural Broadband network (MySRBN). It can also help us run various businesses online and without limits, thus saving costs in terms of marketing.



James Bate

JAMES BATE, 47, Iban, Sebuyau,(Farmer)

-I use online platforms to advertise agricultural products such as corn, watermelons, pineapples, bananas and even marine products such as ikan terubok. The villagers in Sebuyau also make orders through the WhatsApp application, and I will make the delivery to them.



Gwen Kimberly James

GWEN KIMBERLY JAMES, 18, Melanau, Mukah, (Student)

-As a student, the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) being provided in rural areas is very convenient especially when I need to look for information and learning materials online because everything related to education needs to be done using a high-speed internet network.



Candy Ng

CANDY NG, 33, Chinese, Sibuan, (Accountant)

-E-hailing services such as Grab make it very easy for people to move from one location to another, not to mention those who do not have a driving licence. If we are unwell and unfit to drive, this kind of service is much easier and safer.



Stewart Lian

STEWART LIAN, 43, Kenyah, Long Anap, Baram, (Civil Servant)

-As a user, the S Pay Global application can speed up my daily affairs in managing my bill payments as well as a platform for payment at certain retails. I often use S Pay Global for payment of electricity and phone bills and at many other places. We also do not need to carry cash because we can pay with this application.



Radang Tik

RADANG TIK, 50, Penan, Long Tepan, Ulu Baram, (Craft Entrepreneur)

-As a Penan from Long Tepen, the transition to digital technology has a big impact on the lives of the community, including those of us who live in rural areas. It allows us to conduct online business and thus help the community to generate income and upgrade the people's lives.