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Tajuk : O&G firm, varsity ink research and talent development pact

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KUCHING: Shell MDS Sdn Bhd (SMDS) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) have once again strengthened their ties through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for research and talent development.

Unimas vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Kadim Suaidi said Unimas placed important focus in the oil and gas industry because it produced graduates from that industry.

"We produce research product or activities from oil and gas industry, therefore we need an industry partner to look at all these things together with us. We have established an industry and community engagement office which focuses on industry engagement. The collaboration with SMDS is something that I look forward to," he said during the MoU signing ceremony at Wisma Bapa Malaysia.

Through the MoU, Unimas will conduct product research using

Shell-produced Gas-to-Liquid Vis Wax (Sarawax) in 3D printing as well as lightweight concrete for the use of SMDS.

Sarawax is a specialty wax developed by SMDS in Bintulu. It is widely used in industrial, commercial and consumer application. The waxes are marketed as Shell GTL Sarawax.

"One of the things that we're seriously discussing is on how to use wax in 3D printing. We're trying to look into the possibility of using the wax to produce structure and models out of the 3D printer," he said.

The MoU also focuses on the development of upskilling of undergraduates through programmes such as internships and pre-employment preparations.

"Unimas is one of the few universities in Malaysia which have a build-in industry attachment in our curriculum in all programmes. We bring in Shell to train our graduates in terms of internship and increase

graduate employability," said Suaidi.

SMDS director and general manager of marketing Liang Kok Siang said SMDS employed 450 direct employees and another 800 contractor staff on average with over 95% Sarawakians.

"With SMDS, they have accumulated experience and skills to operate world class gas-to-liquid plant, and a number of them has been posted to other Shell locations. We are fully committed to growing our local content and people development agenda," said Liang.

He said SMDS had engaged over 100 final year engineering students annually for over eight years at their practical environmental, safety and industrial guidance for engineers events to share their health safety, security and environmental practices.

According to Liang, Shell had reinvested in the rejuvenation of the Bintulu plant last year during



Suaidi (fourth from left) handing over the signed MoU to Wong (third from right), witnessed by Amar Morshidi (fourth from left) and Liang (fourth from right).

its major plant turnaround. With Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy in Samalaju Bintulu, it is well positioned for greater growth.

"With Shell in Malaysia celebrating the 125th anniversary, our commitment to capability upskilling remains, particularly in support of the state government's effort to enhance undergraduate employability and local institution of capability," said Liang.

Also present during the MoU signing were Sarawak state secretary and Unimas board member Tan Sri Datuk Amar Morshidi Abdul Ghani, Unimas Faculty of Resource Science and Technology dean Associate Professor Dr Othman Bojo, SMDS general manager Tom Wong Kong Hung and Shell Malaysia senior manager of government relations Jonathan Jolly. - By AVA LAI