

# RI IN TOUCH



MALAYSIA

**Asia Real Estate  
Leaders (AREL) -  
Taiwan Study Trip &  
Networking Session**

**REHDA Institute Research  
Workshop - Housing For  
All: Co-Creating A Needs  
Driven Framework**

**Snapshot: Household  
Income Survey Report  
Malaysia 2024**

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## Asia Real Estate Leaders (AREL) – Taiwan Study Trip & Networking Session

Written by Malathi Thevendran  
Director, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute

### Event Overview and Key Highlights

REHDA Institute organised a four-day study trip to Taipei, Taiwan from 18 to 21 November 2025. The 40-member delegation was led by REHDA Institute Trustee Datuk Ng Liong J.P. The trip brought together key industry leaders, including representatives from the Government, Local Authorities, Professionals and Developers.

The objectives of the trip were to study:

- the sophisticated aspects of Taiwan's warehousing sector
- the unique features of Taiwan's affordable housing market
- Taiwan's disaster mitigation strategies in response to current climate change challenges.

We also had the opportunity to visit Taipei 101, which was one of the highlights of the tour and to study its distinctive features related to environmental sustainability.

### Day 1: Business Networking Lunch – Insights and Opportunities in Taiwan's Economic and Real Estate Landscape

REHDA Institute hosted a business networking lunch at Fortune 100, New Taipei City on 18 November 2025. Over 70 senior representatives from the Malaysia's and Taiwan's real estate sectors gathered for this exclusive event, which provided a platform for the exchanging of ideas, sharing of experiences, building connections and exploring potential business opportunities or partnerships.

The welcome speech by Datuk Ng Seing Liang J.P. was followed by the keynote address delivered by Ms Aznifah Abdul Ghani, President of Malaysian Friendship & Trade Centre of Taiwan.



Ms Aznifah Abdul Ghani, President of Malaysian Friendship & Trade Centre of Taiwan, delivering welcome remarks at the networking and business matching session at Fortune 100, New Taipei City on 18 November 2025.

Subsequently, Ms. Lily Chang, President of FIABCI Taiwan, shared that FIABCI Taiwan was established in 1972 and informed the delegation that we would be visiting a FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Awards– Gold Winner social housing project in New Taipei City.

OCBC Bank provided a comprehensive overview of Taiwan's economic landscape and its growth projections for 2025. The acceleration of the global AI race has driven a surge in AI related investment and increased imports of ICT (Information and Communication Tech) products from Taiwan. From 1Q-3Q 2025, Taiwan's economy grew by 7.06% year-on-year. The Taiwan Central Bank projected GDP growth of 4.45% for 2025 and 2.81% for 2026. Given the better-than-expected performance in exports and investment, the full year 2025 economic growth rate is likely to be revised upward.

As an export-oriented country, ICT products and related electronic components contributed approximately 85% of Taiwan's total exports in the first half of 2025, with ASEAN countries accounting for about 20% of this share. The government has planned 13 science parks across Taiwan, with three major ones in Hsinchu, Taichung, and Tainan. The three science parks have achieved record-breaking output, which has significantly boosted the surrounding real estate markets. Housing prices in these areas have risen by 40%-70% over the past five years.



Mr David Wu, Country Head of OCBC Taipei Branch, presenting a comprehensive overview of Taiwan's economic landscape.

Ms Lily Kuo, Partner at Lee and Li, Attorneys-at-Law provided further insights into Taiwan's land laws. She highlighted that Taiwan is governed by the rule of law and its real estate laws are generally stable and predictable. She also outlined several possible structures for real property investment in Taiwan as follows:

- Option 1: Direct acquisition of the property
- Option 2: Establishing a Taiwan subsidiary to acquire the property or acquiring an existing company that owns the property
- Option 3: Entering into a joint venture with other parties to acquire property
- Other Option: An OpCo/PropCo Structure

She further noted that the acquisition of land ownership by foreigners is permitted on a reciprocal basis according to a list published by the Taiwan Ministry of the Interior (MOI), which includes Malaysia. However, a foreign company cannot own real property in Taiwan unless it registers a branch in Taiwan, which requires approval from the Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA).



Ms Lily Kuo, Partner at Lee and Li, Attorneys-at-Law, sharing on the insights on the land laws in Taiwan.

The presentation "Navigating Taiwan's Industrial Real Estate Market – An Outlook for Investors" was delivered by Mr Cliff So, Managing Director of REPro Knight Frank. Taiwan's economy is primarily driven by foreign trade, with exports accounting for about 70% of its GDP. From 2019 to 2024, industrial clusters in Taipei City and New Taipei City recorded a total transaction volume of USD 8.57 billion for industrial offices and factories.

The China-US trade war has reshaped global industrial supply chains, leading many Taiwanese companies to return home and adopt the "China+1" strategy, which has strengthened domestic manufacturing and logistics demand. The TSMC effect has further positioned Taiwan as a key global semiconductor hub. Major AI chip makers, including AMD and Nvidia, have established their Asia-Pacific logistics and distribution centers at the Far Glory Aviation Free Trade Port Zone (a bonded warehouse facility).

In addition, there is growing demand for distribution of ambient and cold-chain food products to support major retailers such as 7-Eleven, FamilyMart, and PX Mart. Logistics capacity has also expanded to serve Taiwan's rapidly growing e-commerce sector, including platforms like MOMO, PChome, Shopee and newer entrants such as Korea's Coupang.

The networking session concluded with a presentation by Mr. Han-Lin Tsai, Honorary Chairman of the Taipei Urban Renewal Institute. He shared insights on Taiwan's urban renewal strategies, disaster management initiatives, and trends in the residential property market. Taiwan experiences between 20,000 and 40,000 earthquakes annually, with 700 to 2,000 of these being felt events each year. This situation prompted the enactment of urban renewal regulations aimed at accelerating the reconstruction of old buildings.



Mr. Han-Lin Tsai, Honorary Chairman of the Taipei Urban Renewal Institute, presenting on the urban renewal initiatives in Taiwan.

He explained that the core challenge in urban renewal is the high cost involved—constructing housing requires substantial capital and incentives alone cannot replace actual financial investment. During his presentation, he also introduced the Alfa Safe Seismic System (patented), which features an integrated reinforcement design, enhanced structural ductility, strong core confinement and improved seismic performance.

Day 1 concluded with a visit to the **Farglory Free Trade Zone (FTZ)**, the first FTZ within Taiwan's territory located outside the customs line that provides both marine and air freight services. Strategically situated adjacent to Taoyuan International Airport, the FTZ enables goods to be shipped worldwide within two days. FTZ enterprises can outsource goods for processing to increase value, while also benefiting from expedited customs procedures, tax incentives and lower labour costs. Designed as an integrated international logistics centre, the FTZ is planned as a cross-border e-commerce hub aimed at attracting more foreign logistics operators.



Group photo of the delegation at the Farglory Free Trade Zone (FTZ) in Taiwan.



Group photo of the delegation at OMEGA 2 Yangmei, with Datuk Ng Seing Liang J.P. (7th from right) presenting a token of appreciation to Ms. Keren Liu, Chief Operating Officer of Ally Logistic Property (7th from left).

## Day 2: Smart Logistics and warehousing complex and award-winning social housing project

We visited **OMEGA 2 Yangmei** and received a briefing from Ms. Keren Liu, Chief Operating Officer of Ally Logistic Property. She explained that logistics is fundamentally about connectivity and because land is expensive, innovation is essential in creating space that is efficient on multiple levels — including multi-storey warehouses where even trucks can access upper floors. Ally Logistic Property has developed smart logistics infrastructure that is implemented across all its warehouses, including its facility in Malaysia. All systems are fully integrated, ensuring seamless operations with minimal manpower interruption. Their rental rates remain competitive and are comparable to those of conventional warehouses, making their facilities both attractive and cost-effective for tenants.

REHDA Institute has undertaken many study trips and visited numerous social housing projects. However, the projects we visited in Taiwan were truly remarkable and deserving of recognition as the **2025 FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Awards – Gold Winner (Affordable Housing Category)**. The highlighted project was **Zhonglu 3 Residences**, developed by the Taoyuan Housing and Urban Regeneration Center and fully retained for lease.

This project forms part of the broader Zhonglu District Social Housing development, which comprises 1,148 units across four projects. Zhonglu 3 Residences consists of 417 units within three buildings, offering layouts of:

- 1-bedroom units (534 sq. ft)
- 2-bedroom units (1,139 sq. ft)
- 3-bedroom units (1,316 sq. ft)

This intelligent social housing project incorporates BIM technology, smart energy management and enhanced community safety and resource integration.

## Day 3: Social housing and Disaster Mitigation Measures

Another social housing project we visited was **Guangci Social Housing**, located in the Xinyi District of Taipei City. As an urban renewal initiative, the project initially faced significant objections from local residents. Today, however, it provides affordable housing in the heart of the city, featuring extensive green spaces, community facilities and a strong emphasis on sustainable living. The development also preserves the charitable legacy of the site, which previously housed a nursing home.

The units range from one-bedroom to three-bedroom layouts, including universally accessible units designed for individuals with special needs.

With climate change affecting countries worldwide, REHDA Institute took a proactive approach by ensuring participants could explore the principles of base isolation technology, observe demonstrations of isolation devices in action and learn how these systems reduce structural damage and enhance safety during earthquakes. While Malaysia has historically not experienced significant earthquakes, recent incidents highlight the need to consider such measures in the future planning and design of buildings.



Group photo of the delegation at the Guangci Social Housing in the Xinyi District of Taipei City on 20 November 2025.

In line with this objective, we visited **Taiwan Matsuzawa Base-Isolation Co. Ltd.** in Yilan City, a leading provider of seismic base-isolation and vibration control solutions. Participants were briefed on design considerations, testing methods and real-world applications of these systems in Taiwan. We also visited one of their high-end developments in Yilan, which had implemented these technologies and observed the construction features that were adopted.

In addition to understanding the systems and features used in construction, it is equally important to learn about disaster prevention and management. This brought us to our next destination, the **National Science and Technology Center (NCDR) for Disaster Reduction**, Taiwan's leading agency for disaster prevention and management.



Representatives from Taiwan Matsuzawa Base-Isolation Co. Ltd. briefing the delegation about the seismic base-isolation and vibration control solutions at the company's residential area.

We were briefed by Mr. **Wei-Sen Li, Secretary General of NCDR**, who explained how science and technology are integrated to enhance disaster monitoring, early warning systems, and national resilience. He introduced the **DIKW+A framework** for building resilience, which spans from science and innovation to decision-making and action: **D** for Data, **I** for Information, **K** for Knowledge, **W** for Wisdom and **A** for Action.

Knowledge, scenario analysis, risk assessment, and evaluation (K, W) form the foundation for science and technology development and innovation (D, I), which then inform decision-making and practical applications (A). Mr. Li highlighted that scientific predictions, real-time monitoring and timely decision-making are critical elements for success. He also emphasized the importance of involving multiple key stakeholders and fostering public-private partnerships in disaster management.

## Day 4: Taipei 101

The climax of the tour was the visit to **Taipei 101**, an iconic 101-story skyscraper that held the title of the tallest building in the world from 2004 to 2009. Renowned for its postmodern design inspired by traditional Asian aesthetics, the building features a distinctive pagoda-like shape. It is also an engineering marvel, housing the world's largest **tuned mass damper**, a massive gold sphere visible to the public, which stabilizes the building against typhoons and earthquakes.



Photo of the Taipei 101's 660-tonne gold-colored tuned mass damper swings like a giant pendulum between floors 87 and 92, stabilising the skyscraper against typhoons and earthquakes.

Taipei 101 offers an observatory deck with panoramic views, luxury shopping and a variety of restaurants. Its remarkable features include energy-efficient systems, waste management strategies, and eco-friendly design elements. The building's waste management strategies, part of its **LEED Platinum certification**, focus on reduction, extensive recycling and creative repurposing of materials. On-site restaurants are encouraged to source food locally to reduce carbon emissions from transportation and food waste is managed to be used as fertilizer or for potential biogas production.

## Conclusion

The **AREL 2025 Study Trip & Lunch Networking Session** was an outstanding success, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, primarily from various Government, State, and Local Authorities. Participants had the opportunity to experience firsthand the unique features of logistics and warehouse operations using smart technologies, world-class social and affordable housing and construction methods designed to address typhoons and earthquakes.

We strongly believe that the success factors and lessons learned from this study trip can be applied to the local real estate sector to promote sustainable best practices in property development.



Group photo of the delegation in front of the Taipei 101 building on 21 November 2025.



## Malaysia Property Development Process 2025 (Klang Valley Edition)

Written by Noor Iman  
Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute

The Malaysia Property Development Process Certification Programme 2025, organised by REHDA Institute in collaboration with Sunway University, was successfully held on 24 and 25 September 2025 at the Feruni Retail Store (FRS), Petaling Jaya. The programme gathered a wide spectrum of industry professionals, including developers and project managers. The purpose of the programme was to equip professionals with an in-depth understanding of the property development process.

One of the most anticipated voices at the seminar was Mr. Ngian Siew Siong, a respected icon in the property industry, who shared invaluable insights drawn from more than four decades of experience. Another highlight was Dato' Wan Hashimi Albakri, a leading figure in property development, who offered participants unique perspectives shaped by over 30 years in construction and asset management. Together, their presence added prestige and depth to the programme.

Beyond these industry icons, the programme featured an impressive lineup of speakers representing both the public and private sectors that shared actionable insights on property development, market strategies, sustainability and future opportunities.

This article highlights the key discussions and insights shared across the programme.

### DAY 1



Dr. Foo Chee Hung, Manager Product Research & Development, MKH Berhad during his speech.

The seminar commenced with Dr. Foo Chee Hung, Manager of Product Research & Development at MKH Berhad who spoke on "Translating Market Insights into Development Opportunities : Understanding Property Data and Industry Trends". He emphasised that while property data is readily available through platforms like EdgeProp and PropertyGuru, the real challenge lies in interpretation. He noted the complexities of analysing locality trends, land prices and shifting market dynamics, where short- and long-term perspectives can shape very different conclusions.



Dato' Wan Hashimi Albakri, Member of Corporation at PR1MA Corporation Malaysia sharing his extensive experience with the participants.

The second session was delivered by Dato' Wan Hashimi Albakri, Member of Corporation at PR1MA Corporation Malaysia and former Acting Group CEO of Sime Darby Property, who spoke on "Turning Vision into Reality: Experience and Lessons Learned in Property Development". Drawing from more than 30 years of leadership experience, he emphasised that a strong vision requires belief, persistence and focus throughout the whole journey in the development process. According to Dato' Wan Hashimi, success in property development is not just about financial investment but also about adopting a mindset of innovation, flexibility and adaptability to navigate challenges and changing market conditions. Equally important, he also highlighted the critical role of constructive engagement with Authorities, regulators and stakeholders.



Peter Chan, CEO of The Haven Group sharing his insights with the audience during the event.

Peter Chan, CEO of The Haven Group, captivated the audience with "The Haven Story: Building a Sustainable and Successful Development Outside the City". He showcased the remarkable journey of The Haven in Tambun, Ipoh. A development that has become a symbol of how sustainability and modern living can coexist harmoniously through eco-friendly designs, innovative architecture and world-class facilities. He highlighted the importance of strong building management in ensuring that developments not only attract buyers but also retain their value and appeal over time. The Haven's success demonstrates that visionary planning can create developments that thrive even outside major city centres.



Noelle Low, Partner at Halim Hong & Quek (HHQ) delivering her presentation at the event.

Noelle Low, Partner at Halim Hong & Quek (HHQ), delivered an insightful session on "Legal & Transactional Due Diligence + Structuring Strategic Partnerships & Joint Ventures". She emphasised that every business decision carries legal implications and it aligns with the business decisions. To guide this process, she introduced the SCOPE framework which stands for Structure, Consideration, Obligation, Payment and Exit. The framework is a practical guide to ensuring clarity and minimising risks in partnerships and joint ventures.



Roger Ong, Chief Commercial Officer of Feruni Ceramiche during his welcoming speech.

Roger Ong, Chief Commercial Officer of Feruni Ceramiche, set the tone for the seminar with an inspiring welcoming address. He shared the Feruni journey, reflecting on how the company's manifesto and vision have shaped its growth and commitment to excellence. He also showcased the company's diverse project portfolio, illustrating how Feruni continues to create meaningful impact in the local property and design industry.



TPr. Julie Chok, Principal of AJC Planning Consultants inspiring participants with her session.

Sharing her expertise as Principal of AJC Planning Consultants, TPr. Julie Chok spoke on "From Vision to Reality: Translating Master Plans into Market-Ready Development Phases". She explained that a master plan sets the vision, while the layout plan realises it as a key document for implementation. She further outlined that a 'market-ready' phase refers to land prepared for immediate use or sale. She also outlined key strategies for developers to achieve an effective master plan.



TPr. Shariman bin Abdul Wahab, Deputy Senior Director at DBKL's One-Stop Centre (OSC) delivering valuable insights during the event.

TPr. Shariman bin Abdul Wahab, Deputy Senior Director at DBKL's One-Stop Centre (OSC), spoke on "Development Control Submission: From Planning Permission to Building Plan Approval". He shared DBKL's latest efforts to enhance efficiency in the development approval process. He highlighted the introduction of OSC 3.0 Plus DBKL Version 2025, launched on August 27, which streamlines the review and approval of Planning Permission and Building Plans. Through this initiative, DBKL aims to simplify the development control process and reduce delays.



Jacqueline Lim, Head of Editorial and Branding at EdgeProp Malaysia sharing her invaluable insights at the event.

Jacqueline Lim, Head of Editorial and Branding at EdgeProp Malaysia, presented "Insights from EdgeProp EPIQ: A Data-Driven Perspective on the Current Property Market". She introduced the EPIQ mapping intelligence platform and shared research on unsold completed units in Kuala Lumpur and the Petaling District. Her insights highlighted how factors such as location, transit access, amenities and household income can influence absorption rates of the housing units. She stressed that project viability is not driven by pricing alone.



Sr Ungku Mohd Iskandar, Managing Director of Valuation, Research & Consulting at CBRE | WTW delivering his speech.

Sr Ungku Mohd Iskandar, Managing Director of Valuation, Research & Consulting at CBRE | WTW, spoke on "Understanding Property Valuation: Key Drivers and Implications for Developers". He explained why valuation is critical for developers—from determining land costs, boosting financing confidence and reducing market risks. He also discussed valuation methods and how developers can address Malaysia's market challenges by adapting product mix and improving efficiency.

## DAY 2



Prof. Pervaiz K. Ahmed, Director of the Institute for Global Strategy and Competitiveness (IGSC), Sunway University presenting his insights at the event.

Prof. Pervaiz K. Ahmed, Director of the Institute for Global Strategy and Competitiveness (IGSC), Sunway University, spoke about "Sustainable Development as a Competitive Advantage: Rethinking Real Estate for Long-Term Value". He spoke on how the real estate industry can play a bigger role in tackling climate change. He reminded the audience that global warming began as far back as the Industrial Revolution and is now worsened by corporate and leadership decisions. Prof. Pervaiz also outlined a vision of the future driven by emerging models of urban living. He explained that smart cities, powered by digital technologies, will enhance efficiency, improve quality of life and reduce environmental impact. By adopting sustainable practices, developers can create stronger, more valuable projects while contributing to a healthier planet.



Mr. Ngian Siew Siong, Board Adviser at Chin Hin Group Property and Director of Nam Long Investment Corporation addressing questions from the audience after his presentation.

Mr. Ngian Siew Siong, Board Adviser at Chin Hin Group Property and Director of Nam Long Investment Corporation, drew from his decades of experience in the industry to deliver his presentation on "Property Development Through the Years: Leadership and Management Lessons". Reflecting on his journey at Sunway City Berhad, he spoke about the importance of a clear mission and vision in driving growth, building strong talent and positioning a company as a trusted developer. His insights offered participants timeless guidance on navigating challenges while staying focused on strategic goals.



Faizul Ridzuan, CEO of FAR Capital sharing his presentation with the audience at the event.

Faizul Ridzuan, CEO of FAR Capital, delivered his presentation on "Cracking the Code: Data-Driven Strategies to Accelerate Bumiputera Lot Sales". He explained that most Bumiputera buyers purchase houses for own-stay, preferring practical layouts, fair pricing and trusted Bumiputera agents. The real issue behind unsold Bumiputera units is product mismatch — layouts, location and accessibility of the property that fail to meet buyer needs. For example, properties may be located far from essential amenities, lack of proximity to suraus in predominantly Muslim areas or unit layouts that do not suit multi-generational families. He advised by aligning projects more closely with buyer preferences, developers can accelerate sales and reduce the number of unsold Bumiputera lots.



Cliff Siaw, CEO of Progressure Solar delivering his presentation.

Cliff Siaw, CEO of Progressure Solar, delivered his session on "Smart Selling Point: Helping Buyers Save or Earn Through Solar-Enabled Homes". He highlighted how solar-enabled houses are no longer just an option but a gamechanger in today's market, as homeowners face rising electricity costs. However, challenges remain, as many roof designs are not suited for solar panels and some developers still perceive solar as a risk. For developers, embracing solar can be a unique selling point.



Ar. Axxu Hoi Jung Wai, Managing Partner of Axial Design Architects (ADA) delivering his insights with the audience.

Ar. Axxu Hoi Jung Wai, Managing Partner of Axial Design Architects (ADA), delivered his presentation on "Designing and Delivering Developments: The Architect's Journey Through Planning, Compliance, and Construction". He shared an in-depth perspective on the architect's role in guiding a development from the beginning to completion, covering all the stages. He also highlighted the need to balance creative vision with regulatory compliance, stakeholder coordination and technical challenges to ensure successful delivery.



Jennifer Chow, Head of Marketing Professional, Property Development sharing her presentation.

Jennifer Chow, Head of Marketing Professional, Property Development, delivered an engaging session on "Sales & Marketing Launch Strategy: Timing, Pricing and Sales Channels". In her session, she emphasised that successful project launches rely on well-coordinated timing, strategic pricing and the right sales channels. She highlighted the importance of collaboration across teams, identifying the best windows of opportunity and using both digital and traditional marketing platforms. By optimizing outreach, developers can capture market attention and drive stronger buyer engagement.



A group photo with the distinguished speakers who shared their expertise at the Malaysia Property Development Process Certification Programme 2025 along with the participants and REHDA Institute representatives.

The Malaysia Property Development Process Certification Programme concluded on a powerful note. The event successfully brought together thought leaders and real estate experts to share valuable insights on the evolving property development industry. The discussions highlighted the importance of vision, adaptability and collaboration in driving progress. As the industry continues to face new challenges and opportunities, the key takeaway remains clear — long-lasting success lies in building with purpose, embracing innovation and staying aligned with the needs of people and the environment.

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The CEO Series 2026 brings together more than 400 key senior stakeholder attendees from both the Government and private sectors (banking & finance, manufacturing, construction, real estate & property development)



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Senior Economist,  
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**Dato' Seri Azmir Merican,**

GMD and CEO, Sime Darby Property



**Jing Jun (JJ) Heng**

Director, CBRE Australia



**Leonard Tay**

Head of Research,  
Knight Frank, Singapore



**Lindy Tan**

Chairperson, REHDA Johor  
(Exec. Director, BCB Berhad)

and more speakers

### TARGET ATTENDEES

**REGISTER NOW**

Designed for business leaders at all levels from mid-level managers to c-suites, bankers and industry professionals, government authorities, property developers, REITS, investors and fund managers.

We have invited international property developers from Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Australia to attend this event.

#### 1. ASEAN and Malaysia's Economic Outlook 2026: Navigating Global Headwinds and Fostering Regional Resilience

- Investment Climate & FDI Strategies: Attracting Quality Capital to Malaysia and ASEAN
- Labor & Human Capital: Education-Industry Linkages and Upskilling for a Competitive ASEAN

#### 2. Special Focus Session on Johor - Singapore and JSSEZ

- Beyond Boundaries: Optimizing Cross-Border Synergies and Integration between Johor and Singapore within the ASEAN Framework
- Johor's Next Wave: Building Integrated Industrial Parks and Ecosystems for the Future of Manufacturing
- Real Estate & Urban Development: Transit-oriented Development and Cross-border Residential Demand

#### 3. Real Estate Focus - Ideas for recurring income streams | Breakout sessions:

##### **STREAM A:**

##### **Future of Rental Living & New-Economy Real Estate**

- Reimagining rental living through co-living, PBSA, hybrid long-stays and institutional-grade BTR/multifamily models shaping future demand.
- Designing competitive, experience-led rental assets driven by tenant lifestyle needs, service standards and flexible living concepts.
- Building resilient portfolios through recurring-income and new-economy real estate, including logistics, data centres and rental housing.

##### **STREAM B:**

##### **Wellness, Tourism & Experience-Led Real Estate**

- Developing integrated wellness and medical tourism districts that anchor high-impact, health-driven real estate ecosystems.
- Creating nature-integrated, low-impact hospitality assets including eco-luxury retreats, regenerative tourism models and sustainable destination design.
- Elevating real estate value through F&B-led placemaking, lifestyle hospitality, and experience-driven mixed-use destination concepts.

## Strata Management Seminar 2025

Written by Noor Iman

*Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute*

The Strata Management Seminar 2025 organised by the REHDA Institute was held on 22–23 October at Wisma REHDA in Petaling Jaya. The two-day event brought together property developers, practitioners and strata management professionals to discuss the challenges and progressing trends in strata development, with a strong focus on planning, compliance, dispute management and operational best practice.

The workshop featured presentations from key industry experts, including Chris Tan, Managing Partner (Chur Associates), Datuk Sr. Charlie Chia (Committee Chairperson of the Strata Management Act and Strata Titles Act at REHDA Malaysia) and Sr Muhammad Zul Fiqah (Head of Unit, Commissioner of Buildings, Majlis Perbandaran Kuala Selangor).

### DAY 1

#### Strata Development Planning, Phasing, Layout Design Challenges and Risks Management



The seminar began with an in-depth discussion on strata development, focusing on its evolving landscape in Malaysia and the challenges of planning, phasing and risk management. Chris Tan, Managing Partner, Chur Associates, emphasised the importance of integrating Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) requirements into design considerations. He explained that developers play a critical role in both the creation and ongoing management of strata properties.

The session covered the evolution of strata development under Malaysian law, from the National Land Code to the Strata Titles Act 2013, and explored key concepts such as Common Property, Limited Common Property (LCP) and parcel boundaries. He also provided practical guidance on parcel types, including main parcels and accessory parcels such as car parks, storage areas and EV charging spaces. He highlighted how these classifications affect usage rights, ownership entitlements and management responsibilities.

Chris Tan highlighted several current challenges in the industry:

- Phased developments and the complications during the transition between phases of construction.
- Short-term stay properties (Airbnb, serviced apartments).
- Co-living and co-working spaces.
- Regulatory considerations for TOD and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

He concluded his session by explaining phasing strategies, including provisional share units, LCP creation and bridging financing considerations to mitigate risks during multi-phase developments.

#### Major Issues and Difficulties in Strata Management



Datuk Sr. Charlie Chia, REHDA Committee Chairperson, Strata Management Act & Strata Titles Act presenting his professional views to the audience.

Datuk Sr. Charlie Chia, REHDA Committee Chairperson, Strata Management Act & Strata Titles Act delivered an insightful presentation on the major issues and practical difficulties faced in strata management. Drawing from extensive industry experience, he highlighted persistent challenges such as units remaining unoccupied after vacant possession, owners defaulting on payments and developers having to subsidise service charges.

He also addressed structural and regulatory issues including complications arising from provisional blocks and the relatively low rate of strata title transfers from developers to purchasers which often affects governance, enforcement and long-term management efficiency.

In addition, Datuk Sr. Charlie Chia highlighted operational issues such as inter-floor leakages, where determining responsibility and allocating costs between the upstairs and downstairs units or the management body often leads to disputes.

He concluded by emphasising the growing importance of clear and enforceable house rules, particularly regarding home-sharing and Airbnb activities, which must be carefully managed to minimise conflicts within strata communities.

DAY 2

## Strata Dispute Management and Resolution

The second day of the seminar focused on strata dispute management, providing participants with practical approaches to address common challenges such as payment defaults, late payments and property defects.

Chris Tan began by explaining the differences between maintenance charges and sinking funds, outlining how they are calculated, collected and the potential consequences if owners fail to make timely payments. He then discussed inter-floor leakages and party wall damages, highlighting statutory presumptions and the step-by-step processes for resolving disputes between affected parties.

Defect liability claims were another key focus, with guidance on the timelines within which developers are required to rectify defects and the measures purchasers can take if issues remain unresolved. Chris Tan also elaborated on the role of the COB in enforcing compliance, including powers such as the seizure of movable assets and oversight of management bodies to ensure proper strata governance.

He concluded his session by covering the procedures, jurisdictions and claims process of the Strata Management Tribunal (SMT), referencing key regulations under the Strata Management (SMT) Regulations 2015.

## **The Role of the Commissioner of Buildings (COB) in Strata Management**



Sr Muhammad Zul Fiqah bin Omar, Head of Unit, Commissioner of Buildings (COB), Majlis Perbandaran Kuala Selangor (MPKS) delivering his presentation to the participants.

Sr Muhammad Zul Fiqah, , Head of Unit, Commissioner of Buildings (COB), Majlis Perbandaran Kuala Selangor (MPKS) delivered a comprehensive presentation on the role of the COB in managing strata properties.

He began by explaining the statutory powers granted to the COB under the Strata Management Act 2013 (Act 757).

emphasising how these powers enable the office to oversee and regulate the activities of developers, Joint Management Bodies (JMB) and Management Corporations (MC).

He outlined the COB's responsibilities in ensuring compliance with the law, maintaining proper governance of strata communities and addressing disputes between parties. Sr Muhammad Zul Fiqah also highlighted practical best practices that developers and management bodies can adopt to minimise risks and prevent conflicts, including clear communication with owners, proper allocation of responsibilities and proactive maintenance of common property.

In addition, he clarified on the penalties imposed for non-compliance or offences under the Act and elaborated on the technical functions of the COB, such as reviewing strata management plans and monitoring service charge collection. Through his presentation, the audience gained a comprehensive understanding of how the COB operates to maintain orderly, fair and legally compliant strata management.



A group photo with one of the speaker, Chris Tan along with the participants of the Strata Management Seminar 2025.

The seminar provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and practical challenges in strata development and management. Across the two days, speakers shared valuable insights on planning, phasing, design considerations, maintenance and dispute resolution.

Participants gained a deeper appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of developers, owners, management corporations, the COB and the SMT in ensuring well-governed, harmonious and sustainable strata communities.

The event successfully promoted knowledge sharing, professional engagement and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of proactive management and cooperation among all stakeholders in strata development.

## Industrial Development & Roundtable Masterclass 2025

Written by Irdina Khairuddin  
*Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute*

The Industrial Development & Roundtable Masterclass took place on 25 & 26 November 2025 at the Mah Sing Auditorium, Wisma REHDA, Petaling Jaya. Organised by REHDA Institute, this two-day, closed-door event brought together more than 70 participants, including industry leaders, policymakers, industrial park developers and industrial and green technology solution providers, to discuss Malaysia's evolving industrial landscape.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Datuk Seri Dr. Michael Yam, Trustee of REHDA Institute. He called for a more resilient and knowledge driven industrial ecosystem. He stressed the need for Malaysia to keep pace with global shifts by strengthening technical expertise and fostering closer collaboration between developers, regulators and industry stakeholders.

### Investor Concerns and Regulatory Bottlenecks

During the roundtable discussions, investors and developers candidly shared the challenges they face on the ground. Among the key concerns raised were rising regulatory and compliance costs, uncertainty in tax incentives, high electricity and utility costs, skilled labour shortages and infrastructure readiness, all of which reduce Malaysia's competitiveness compared to ASEAN neighbours such as Vietnam and Indonesia.



Participants engaging in an in-depth discussion on industrial development challenges at the Industrial Development & Roundtable Masterclass 2025.

In addition to these issues, the participants also highlighted how manual approval processes across Local Authorities and utility departments contribute to project delays, with personal follow-ups often required to move applications forward. To address these bottlenecks, proposed solutions included implementing online submission systems, introducing fixed response timelines and linking staff performance KPIs to approval efficiency in order to expedite processing and enhance investor confidence. Developers also expressed growing frustration over Planning Permission and Building Plan applications, noting that delays are often caused by third-party utility providers.

Even when these delays are beyond their control, developers frequently face penalties or have their extension requests rejected. At the same time, the ESG integration is becoming increasingly important, yet it presents challenges related to cost, implementation scope and technical requirements.

Despite these difficulties, the participants shared that practical measures such as solar installations, smart building systems and enhanced waste management initiatives have proven effective and achievable, offering a realistic path toward more sustainable industrial development.

### Legal and Industrial Framework

Noelle Low Pui Voon, Partner at Halim Hong & Quek (HHQ), outlined Malaysia's legal framework by highlighting key regulations such as the National Land Code, the Industrial Coordination Act and the various State Consent requirements. She explained that four critical approvals, namely State Consent, Foreign Investment Approval, Economic Planning Unit (EPU) Clearance and Estate Land Board (ELB) Consent, form the foundation of regulatory compliance, particularly when land is being converted from agricultural to industrial use.

She also shared examples of recent court cases to demonstrate the legal risks that may arise when these requirements are overlooked. Noelle emphasised the importance of thorough due diligence, early engagement with relevant Authorities and maintaining complete and accurate documentation throughout the development process to ensure compliance and prevent costly complications.



TPr. Julie Chok, Principal of AJC Planning Consultants presenting the framework of agri-tech industrial park in Iskandar Malaysia.

### Flagship Projects and Strategic Development

TPr. Julie Chok, with her extensive experience in real estate and development, shared insights on the 2,940-acre agri-tech industrial park in Iskandar Malaysia. The project integrates agriculture, logistics and manufacturing to address post-COVID priorities such as food security, supply chain resilience and activating underutilised farmlands.

Guided by a six-pillar framework consisting of connectivity, carbon, character, community, collaboration and cash flow, the development incorporates smart systems, water management, phased transportation planning and strategic partnerships with universities and precision agriculture companies. These elements work together to create a sustainable, high-value industrial ecosystem that supports innovation and benefits the local community.

Allan Sim, a highly experienced real estate professional of Knight Frank Malaysia, shared the key insights on global manufacturing shifts, noting how supply chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions have pushed companies to diversify production beyond single-country dependence. He highlighted Asia's strong position in manufacturing, driven by growth in electric vehicles, semiconductor demand and data center expansion.



Allan Sim, Senior Executive Director of Knight Frank Malaysia, during his presentation at the Industrial Development Masterclass.

Allan also highlighted that weakening consumer sentiment in several regional markets is slowing manufacturing activity and reducing investment, making it increasingly difficult for countries to stay competitive unless they shift toward higher-value industries. In this context, he emphasised that Malaysia already has a strong foundation in high-tech and knowledge-based manufacturing but must continue strengthening its position through supportive policies and attractive foreign investment incentives.

## Semiconductor and Data Center Insights

Dr Lee Hing Wah, Head of Semiconductor in the Venture Division of Selangor Information Technology & Digital Economy Corporation (SIDEK), highlighted Malaysia's strong back-end manufacturing and packaging capabilities but noted that its GDP contribution remains low despite high export share, underscoring the need to move into higher-value front-end activities. He outlined the National Semiconductor Strategy, which prioritises Integrated Circuit (IC) design due to its high margins and lower infrastructure needs while recognising continued opportunities in mature nodes and growing demand for power semiconductors such as gallium nitride. He emphasised the importance of cleanroom access, university collaboration, local supply chain development and targeted growth in automotive semiconductors to boost Malaysia's competitiveness in the global semiconductor landscape.



James Rix, Head of Data Center and Industrial for Malaysia and Indonesia at JLL, during his presentation, highlighting high-density computing and carbon footprint challenges.

James Rix, a technical expert and Head of Data Center and Industrial for Malaysia and Indonesia at JLL, outlined the rising energy demands of modern data centers, emphasising high-density computing requirements where a single rack can consume up to 400 kilowatts. He highlighted the challenges of carbon footprints and the limits of traditional net-zero strategies, which only balance rather than reduce emissions. James evaluated alternative energy solutions such as nuclear and hydrogen while addressing practical infrastructure challenges and shared successful examples of converting underutilised buildings into data centers, including sites in Finland, London, Chicago and Manchester. He stressed the importance of regulatory compliance, ISO standards adapted for tropical conditions, detailed monitoring of power usage effectiveness and active community engagement to ensure sustainable and efficient operations.

## Investment Facilitation and Digital Infrastructure



Mohd Rezauddin presenting the MIDA's efforts to streamline investment processes.

Mohd Rezauddin from the Domestic Investment Division at the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) presented the digital integration of investment processes, which marks an important step toward improving efficiency and transparency in Malaysia's industrial investment landscape. He explained that MIDA is consolidating multiple technical and public agency functions into a single unified platform, enabling investors to access services more quickly and with fewer delays.

He added that the new system offers real-time monitoring and mobile-friendly access, allowing investors to track project progress, ensure compliance and make informed decisions based on accurate data. This digital approach reduces bureaucratic hurdles, strengthens coordination across States and supports sustainable and innovative development, ultimately making Malaysia a more attractive and efficient destination for industrial investment.

## Industrial Design, Renewable Energy and Smart Infrastructure

Ar. Axxu Hoi Jung Wai, Managing Partner at Axial Design Architects Sdn Bhd (ADA), emphasised the early-stage feasibility studies for cost control. He explained that carefully assessing project feasibility at the concept and schematic design stages allows developers and architects to identify potential issues before construction begins. This proactive approach minimises expensive modifications during later phases, when changes become significantly more costly.

Ar. Axxu also highlighted the importance of structured regulatory submission processes, thorough contract management and effective construction administration to ensure projects stay on schedule, meet compliance requirements and maintain budget control. By combining early planning with disciplined project management, developers can achieve more efficient, predictable and successful industrial developments.



Ar. Axxu Hoi Jung Wai, Managing Partner at Axial Design Architects Sdn Bhd (ADA), presenting during the Industrial Masterclass.

Cliff Siaw, CEO of Progressure Solar, focused on the early integration of renewable energy and net zero strategies in industrial park planning. He explained that incorporating solar power, battery storage and carbon reduction measures from the outset allows industrial developers to optimise energy efficiency, reduce operational costs and meet regulatory and sustainability requirements. By planning for renewable energy early, developers can ensure long-term competitiveness, align with global sustainability trends and reduce carbon footprints effectively across industrial operations.

Dato' George Stewart LaBrooy, Executive Chairman at AREA Management Sdn Bhd, presented the six pillars of modern industrial development, which provide a framework for creating competitive and sustainable industrial parks. He explained that these pillars, including market research and intelligence, skilled workforce development, integrated infrastructure, sustainability and ESG compliance, professional management and technology integration, are essential for guiding planning, operations and investment decisions. By applying this framework, developers can anticipate market needs, optimise infrastructure and resource use and ensure long-term operational efficiency.



Datuk Seri Dr. Michael Yam, Trustee of REHDA Institute, presenting a token of appreciation to Dato' George Stewart LaBrooy.

Mr. Simon Chan, General Manager of Sales and Marketing at NCT Group, concluded with insights on integrating smart technologies and sustainable design in industrial parks. He explained that implementing Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled monitoring, energy management systems and flood mitigation measures from the early planning stages enables developers to optimise operations, reduce risks and improve resource efficiency. Phased construction, combined with green architecture and strong connectivity, ensures that industrial parks can adapt to evolving needs while maintaining high sustainability standards. By leveraging these smart and sustainable solutions, developers can enhance operational efficiency, lower costs and create resilient industrial ecosystems that satisfy both investor and environmental expectations.

## Conclusion

The two-day Industrial Masterclass provided a comprehensive platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas and explore strategies to advance Malaysia's industrial sector. Discussions throughout the event highlighted the need for stronger collaboration among government agencies, industry players and technology partners, together with innovation through modern industrial solutions and forward planning in areas such as infrastructure, regulatory processes and sustainable development to build a resilient and competitive ecosystem. With continued investment in digital infrastructure, renewable energy, smart design and high value manufacturing, Malaysia is well positioned to strengthen its industrial landscape and support future economic growth.



## REHDA Institute (Official)

4,159 followers  
26 November 2025

...

Malaysia's industrial future isn't just being discussed; it's being **shaped right now and the insights from the recent REHDA Institute Industrial Development Roundtable & Masterclass 2025** are illuminating the path forward!

Over two impactful days (25–26 Nov 2025) at Wisma REHDA, Petaling Jaya, we convened over 60 developers, policymakers, consultants & ecosystem partners. Our mission: to tackle Malaysia's industrial challenges & unlock its immense potential.

Here's a snapshot of the critical discussions that defined the event:

### 1. Strong Growth & Robust Pipeline: A High-Conviction Segment

- Malaysia's industrial sector is in a structural upcycle, contributing 37% of national GDP.
- With 71,000+ completed units & 3,600+ under construction, plus an estimated 13.4% CAGR, it's outperforming other segments. An impressive 79% of developers are optimistic for 2026!

### 2. Strategic Drivers & High-Value Focus: Integrated Ecosystems are Non-Negotiable

- Investors demand integrated industrial parks, offering speed & certainty from day one.
- The E&E sector, global semiconductor demand, EV transition, e-commerce and data centre expansion are driving demand for high-tech, built-to-suit assets.
- Developers must deliver Industrial Revolution 4.0-ready infrastructure, ensuring reliable power, redundancy and digital connectivity.

### 3. Actionable Policy & ESG Priorities: Compliance and Future-Proofing

- To attract long-term, high-value tenants, ESG must be embedded from design to operation.
- This means solar-ready rooftops, energy-efficient designs, water management, sustainable waste systems and dignified workforce accommodation (e.g., CLQs).
- The future is an "industrial-as-a-service" model, combining hard infrastructure with advanced park management and compliance support.

A significant highlight was the **official launch of the EdgeProp Malaysia & REHDA Institute Industrial Special Report** on Nov 25th, 2025. This collaborative report, unveiled by Datuk Seri Dr Michael Yam (REHDA Institute Trustee) & Alvin Ong (Managing Director, EdgeProp), provides invaluable insights into this dynamic sector. Special thanks to Dr Foo Chee Hung, Mr Low Gay Teck (MD, Land & General Berhad), Jacqueline Lim (Head of Editorial & Brand, EdgeProp Malaysia), Ir Loh Ban Ho (Perak Branch Chairperson, REHDA Malaysia) & Mr David Chong (COO, REHDA Institute) for witnessing this milestone.

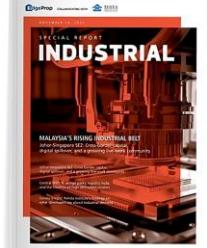
We are incredibly grateful to all participants for their invaluable contributions. Together, we are building a more resilient, innovative & sustainable industrial landscape for Malaysia!

#REHDAInstitute #IndustrialRealEstate #IndustrialDevelopmentRoundtable



**SPECIAL REPORT**

**EdgeProp** in collaboration with  REHDA INSTITUTE



**INSIGHTS FROM:**

Tengku Zafrel, Dato' Stewart LaBrooy, REHDA Institute, GreenRE, SDEC, Knight Frank, ECER, InvestPenang, NCER, Invest Selangor, Airscan, CIMB Securities, JLL Malaysia

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## REHDA Institute Research Workshop - Housing For All: Co-Creating A Needs Driven Framework

Written by Huong Yu Sin

*Assistant Manager, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute*

REHDA Institute convened a closed-door roundtable discussion titled "Housing for All: Co-Creating a Needs Driven Framework" on 3 December 2025 at Mah Sing Auditorium, Petaling Jaya, bringing together over 100 stakeholders across the housing industry to foster constructive, evidence-based dialogue on the effectiveness, relevance and future direction of Malaysia's price-controlled housing and Bumiputera quota policies.

The session gathered a diverse group of participants comprising representatives from Government agencies, State housing boards, Local Authorities, financial institutions, professional bodies, academic institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), think tanks and developers. Federal government agencies represented included the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT), Ministry of Economy, Department of Valuation and Property Services (NAPIC), Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) and PLANMalaysia. State Housing Authorities from Pahang, Perak, Pulau Pinang and Selangor also participated.

The roundtable further benefited from the participation of major financial institutions such as CIMB Group Holdings Berhad, HSBC Bank Malaysia Berhad, and Malayan Banking Berhad, as well as professional bodies including Pertubuhan Arkitek Malaysia (PAM), Malaysian Institute of Planners (MIP) and the Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM).

Academic institutions present included Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). NGOs and think tanks such as Khazanah Research Institute (KRI), Malaysian Association of Abandoned Building Owners (Victims Malaysia) and Save Kuala Lumpur also contributed to the discussions.



Dato' Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip, Chairman of REHDA Institute, delivering concluding remarks for the Housing For All workshop.

### Key Discussion Themes and Outcomes

The discussion featured a presentation by Sr. Malathi Thevendran, Director of Research and Education at REHDA Institute, and was moderated by Datuk NK Tong, Immediate Past President of REHDA Malaysia. Breakout roundtable discussions were facilitated by senior academic staff from Universiti Malaya, enabling focused deliberations across five thematic areas:

1. Malaysia's housing policy evolution and socio-demographic trends
2. Variations in housing policy implementation across States
3. Stakeholder perspectives on challenges to sustainable and accessible housing
4. International models of inclusive housing
5. A framework for accessible and inclusive housing for all



Datuk NK Tong, Immediate Past President of REHDA Malaysia, facilitating discussions during the Housing For All workshop.

In his concluding remarks, Dato' Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip, Chairman of REHDA Institute, emphasised the need for dynamic, data-driven and collaborative approaches to address Malaysia's housing challenges. He reiterated that the intent of reviewing housing quota policies is not to dismantle them, but to ensure they remain responsive to changing market and socio-economic conditions.

In his concluding remarks, Dato' Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip, Chairman of REHDA Institute, emphasised the need for dynamic, data-driven and collaborative approaches to address Malaysia's housing challenges. He reiterated that the intent of reviewing housing quota policies is not to dismantle them, but to ensure they remain responsive to changing market and socio-economic conditions.

Key themes emerging from the roundtable included:

- Regular review of housing quota policies to reflect evolving market dynamics and local conditions, rather than applying uniform requirements across all States and Districts.
- Net disposable income was highlighted as a more meaningful indicator of housing affordability than gross household income, as it better reflects households' actual spending capacity.
- The importance of data sharing, integration and analysis, noting that while extensive datasets exist (e.g. PADU, DOSM, NAPIC), they remain underutilised for policymaking and enforcement.

- Weak enforcement and monitoring of price-controlled housing eligibility were identified as areas requiring urgent attention to prevent abuse and misuse.
- The need to move away from a predominantly punitive policy framework towards one that provides positive incentives to encourage compliance and responsible delivery.
- Recognition that social housing is a shared responsibility, requiring contributions from government, developers, financial institutions and other stakeholders.
- The potential to unlock idle or underutilised land, particularly land surrendered for public facilities that remains unused, for social housing purposes.

- Exploration of broader sharing of cross-subsidy burdens, including examining whether financial institutions could play a role through innovative financing structures, subject to regulatory considerations.
- *Bumiputera* quota and discounts are not for all and should not be applied to luxury housing categories to ensure effective targeting and policy coherence.

## Conclusion

The roundtable underscored the complexity of housing affordability challenges and reaffirmed the importance of collaboration across sectors. As a social enterprise and independent think tank dedicated to training, research and education, REHDA Institute reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with the Government and industry stakeholders to support the development of a sustainable and needs-driven housing ecosystem for Malaysia.



Group photo with Dato' Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip (middle in the first row), Chairman of REHDA Institute and Datuk NK Tong (seventh from the right in the first row), Immediate Past President of REHDA Malaysia, facilitators and participants.

## Empowering the Property Industry: REHDA Institute & Monash University Malaysia Conclude 7-Day AI-Driven Digital Marketing Transformation Initiative (DMTI) Executive Certification Programme

Written by Pearljit Singh

Assistant Manager, Strategic Marketing & Research, REHDA Institute

REHDA Institute has successfully concluded the **AI-Driven Digital Marketing Transformation Initiative (DMTI)**, a comprehensive 7-day Executive Certification Programme designed to elevate the digital marketing capabilities of Malaysia's property industry. Held across 14, 15, 16, 22 & 23 October 2025 via Zoom and culminating in two full physical training days on 28 & 29 October 2025 at Wisma REHDA, Kelana Jaya, the programme was delivered in collaboration with Monash University Malaysia.

Bringing together senior practitioners from leading agencies, property groups, and technology innovators, DMTI delivered an integrated learning experience that blended foundational theory, hands-on workshops, analytics training and real-world case studies tailored specifically for property marketing teams. The programme concluded with a Graduation Ceremony, where certificates were jointly presented by **Dato' Jeffrey Ng**, Chairman of REHDA Institute, and **Ir. Dr. Manjeevan Singh Seera**, Deputy Head of School, Malaysia School of Business, Monash University Malaysia.

### A Curriculum Built on Real-World Experience and Industry Knowledge

The executive certification programme was anchored by **Logarajah Thambyrajah**, Principal Consultant at Kognifi, who served as the lead trainer across all seven days. His sessions formed the backbone of DMTI, covering audience insights, persona development, the Customer Decision Journey (CDJ), sales funnel design, Attention, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA)-based activation strategies, content relevancy and the practical use of tools such as Google Analytics (GA4), Google Tag Manager (GTM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) pipelines. Through repeated hands-on workshops, he guided participants in building intent-based funnels, structuring omnichannel campaigns, diagnosing performance gaps and proposing corrective actions grounded in data and AI-driven decision science.

Adding to the depth of the sessions, **Melvin Ng Keng Zhing**, Chief Marketing Officer of OCR Group Berhad, delivered a compelling webinar segment on crafting targeted campaigns through clearer positioning, persona-driven messaging and performance-based evaluation. He demonstrated how different segments (young couples, families, retirees and investors) require distinct messaging, channels and touchpoint journeys and showed how these insights feed into targeting, content creation and budget allocation. Melvin also highlighted the importance of GA4, GTM and CRM-linked tracking to optimise conversions and improve campaign performance.

Artificial intelligence took centre stage through **Bayu Eka Putra**, COO & Co-Founder of Mimin, who began by outlining today's digital buyer behaviour, where 90% of Malaysian property seekers start their search online and 78% choose the first developer who responds, highlighting the urgency of instant engagement. He explained how AI-powered and agentic chatbots streamline the sales funnel by providing rapid, personalised responses, qualifying leads, scheduling appointments and updating CRM systems automatically. Bayu also showcased practical use cases in lead filtering, customer service and property management, along with a straightforward framework for deploying and scaling AI solutions.

During the physical session at Wisma REHDA, **Faizul Ridzuan**, CEO of FAR Capital, delivered an insight-driven session on understanding digital buyers and what truly drives property purchasing decisions, especially within the Bumiputera market. He shared data from FAR Capital's large buyer database to highlight shifting demographics and buyer psychology, explaining why Bumi purchasers prioritise practical layouts, family suitability, exit strategies and capital-friendly packages over simple discounts. Using real cases of "stuck" Bumiputera units, he showed how misaligned layouts, poor location and weak value communication hinder sales.



Participants attentively listening to the presentation during the AI-Driven Digital Marketing Transformation Initiative (DMTI) Executive Certification Programme.

**Daniel Woodroof**, Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Pandan Social, shared how developers can leverage TikTok and short-form video to capture audience attention through authentic storytelling and platform-native creativity. He highlighted the types of content that perform well for property brands such as walkthroughs, lifestyle segments and creator collaborations and emphasised the importance of analysing retention and engagement data to refine content strategy. His session offered practical guidance on building a consistent short-form content engine that boosts visibility and drives enquiries among younger, digitally savvy buyers.

On day two of the physical session, **Teng Chan Leong**, CEO of Skribble Group, kicked off with a strategic session on why many property campaigns underperform and how branding, when done correctly, can dramatically improve results. He explained that most branding issues are actually strategy issues, outlining three common pitfalls: undefined target markets, lack of differentiation and weak value offerings. Chan Leong introduced a clear framework built on three pillars (Target Market, USP and Value Offering) and demonstrated how each project type requires its own brand strategy, message and positioning.

**Ir. Dr. Manjeevan Singh Seera** from Monash University Malaysia focused on how developers turn marketing data into actionable decisions by identifying which metrics truly matter and how to interpret the sales funnel beyond surface-level dashboards. He explained how to analyse lead sources, buyer segments and funnel drop-offs and introduced key KPIs such as channel attribution and return on investment (ROI). Dr. Manjeevan also highlighted the role of predictive analytics, lead scoring and buyer profiling in prioritising high-intent leads and forecasting demand, giving participants a clear framework for using data to optimise campaigns and improve real estate marketing outcomes.

Lastly, **Kuhan Kumar**, Chief Orchestrator of Digital Symphony, shared deep insights into real-time lead intelligence. He explained how real-time lead intelligence bridges the gap between marketing and sales by shifting optimisation toward early-stage buyer behaviour rather than waiting weeks for offline results. He emphasised that metrics like response speed, WhatsApp engagement and lead-to-visit ratios provide far clearer insight into buyer intent and highlighted that automating the first touch can increase response rates by 58%, a critical driver of better lead quality and conversions.

## Assessment-Driven Certification for Real-World Competence

More than a technical training programme, DMTI required participants to demonstrate mastery through weekly assignments, hands-on workshops and structured assessments. This ensured each graduate could apply AI tools, develop funnel strategies, execute content frameworks and interpret analytics in the context of actual property campaigns.

Participants who fulfilled all requirements received a Joint Executive Certificate of Completion from REHDA Institute and Monash University Malaysia, signifying not only completion but verified competence in AI-driven digital marketing.

## Positioning the Property Industry for a Data-Driven Future

The overwhelmingly positive reception to DMTI affirms its status as Malaysia's most specialised and practice-driven AI and digital marketing certification programme for the property industry. With rapidly shifting buyer behaviours, the rise of automation and the centrality of data-driven decision-making, the programme prepares property developers and marketers to navigate an increasingly complex digital landscape with confidence and agility.

As the property market continues to evolve, REHDA Institute together with Monash University Malaysia, remains committed to advancing industry capabilities and empowering professionals with the tools to thrive in the next era of digital transformation.



Group photo of Dato' Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip (centre of the second row), Chairman of REHDA Institute, together with the participants of the AI-Driven Digital Marketing Transformation Initiative (DMTI) Executive Certification Programme.

## Utility Approvals: The Coordination Paradox

Written by Noor Iman

*Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute*

### Introduction

Utility approvals play a vital role in both greenfield and brownfield developments in Malaysia. Achieving approvals successfully requires a good understanding of the regulatory framework, early engagement with relevant technical agencies and proactive planning, as multiple agencies are typically involved.

In urban areas, utility corridors particularly in brownfield sites, are often congested or disorganised.

Key utilities include:

- Electricity
- Water Supply
- Sewerage
- Telecommunications
- Gas Supply

Brownfield projects often face challenges such as limited capacity, aging infrastructure that needs retrofitting, coordination with existing pipelines, upgrades, limited space or decommissioning of old systems.

Greenfield developments, on the other hand, require complete network design, extensive planning, new construction, coordinated installation of utilities and integration with initiatives like Smart Cities.

While the utility approval process follows a structured approach, it is multi-layered, requiring developers to coordinate with multiple service providers under either State or Federal authorities.

In recent years, some States have created utilities coordination agencies to facilitate approvals and streamline coordination, particularly for underground infrastructure.

Examples include:

- Koridor Utiliti Johor*
- Koridor Utiliti Selangor*
- Koridor Utiliti Teknologi Terengganu*
- Utiliti Infra Darul Aman*

### Industry Challenges

Based on the industry feedback, developers interfacing with One Stop Utility Agencies often face challenges in the following areas:-

### 1. Prolonged Approval Timelines

- One Stop Utility Agencies serve as a coordinating body for various utility approvals, with set timelines for tasks such as documentation review, distribution to technical agencies, notification of approvals, traffic management planning, utility mapping and preparation of as-built plans.
- However, these timelines are often not strictly adhered, leading to significant delays.
- For example, a task expected to take 5 working days on paper may extend to several weeks in practice due to site visit scheduling conflicts and inter-agency coordination issues.
- Additionally, these agencies lack legal authority to compel utility service providers to adhere to specific timelines for approvals, technical comments or clearances.
- The absence of prescribed timelines or non-compliance with them creates uncertainty for developers and disrupts project planning.
- For projects with a Gross Development Value (GDV) of RM100 million, even a single day of delay can result in holding costs of approximately RM3,800, with larger projects and prolonged delays causing costs to increase exponentially.

Table 1: Example of Holding Cost Estimate Based on GDV

<i>GDV RM 100 million</i>
<i>x 20% (land &amp; preliminaries) x 7% holding costs p.a</i>
<i>365 days</i>
<i>= RM3,800 per day in holding costs</i>

Source: REHDA Institute Research

### 2. Lack of Real-Time Tracking and Transparency

- Without real-time tracking of applications, developers are often unaware of the status of their submissions.
- They must follow up individually with each utility agency, as One Stop Utility Agencies generally do not take a proactive role in updating developers.

### 3. Redundant Submissions

- Even with coordination, some utility agencies may still require separate or duplicate submissions, including similar drawings, which adds to administrative burden and delays.

### 4. Revision of Technical Requirements

- When technical standards are inconsistent, developers must resolve conflicts directly with the respective utility agencies.
- This can lead to repeated submissions, further misaligning project timelines.
- Since utility approval is essential for subsequent stages of development, any delays can cascade, affecting later approvals and construction progress.

### 5. Facilitative Role with No Legal Enforcement Power

- One Stop Utility Agencies function as coordinators in a facilitative capacity but lack legal authority.
- They cannot set deadlines for utility agencies, enforce mandatory compliance with guidelines or resolve disputes between developers and utility agencies.
- Their limited accountability means that in cases of delay or impasse, they cannot escalate issues or enforce timely resolutions.

## 6. Additional Process Resulting in Added Cost of Doing Business

- The involvement of One Stop Utility Agencies adds another layer of governance, potentially creating inefficiencies and increasing the cost of doing business.
- This includes higher consultancy and staffing costs, as well as time-based holding costs.
- These expenses are in addition to fees paid directly to the agencies.

Table 2: List of Charges Payable to Utility Agencies

<b>Registration</b>	RM200
<b>Processing</b>	RM100
<b>Service Charges</b>	<p>RM25 - RM26.50++ / meter (underground utility mapping, topography survey and traffic management plan).</p> <p>For example, underground cable installation works of 1.2km will incur about RM30,000 in charges (payable to One Stop Utility Agency).</p>
<b>Way Leave Permit &amp; Deposits</b>	RM1,800 / meter in deposits and 10% in fees (payable to some Local Authority).

Source: REHDA Institute Research

## Industry Position

The industry supports efforts to coordinate utility approvals and avoid conflicts. However, the mechanism must be efficient, cost-effective and add value by simplifying the development process.

## 1. One Stop Utility Approval Agencies = Passive Intermediary

- One Stop Utility Agencies are set up to improve coordination and act as a single centre for approvals but mainly serve as passive intermediaries between applicants and approving authorities.
- They do not have legal or technical decision-making powers and no conflict resolution protocols, adding complexity, time and cost to projects.
- Ideally, these agencies should be legally mandated, enforce service level agreements, act as a single-window clearance system and provide proactive technical coordination at a reasonable cost rather than acting as a passive inter agency liaison coordinator.
- Proposal:
  - As a short-term measure, to streamline internal clearance timelines and strictly adhere to deadlines.
  - Require utility agencies to respond within prescribed timelines through an enforceable Service Level Agreement.
  - Shift utility approval agencies from an administrative to a technical role, enabling them to manage issues and arbitrate when needed.

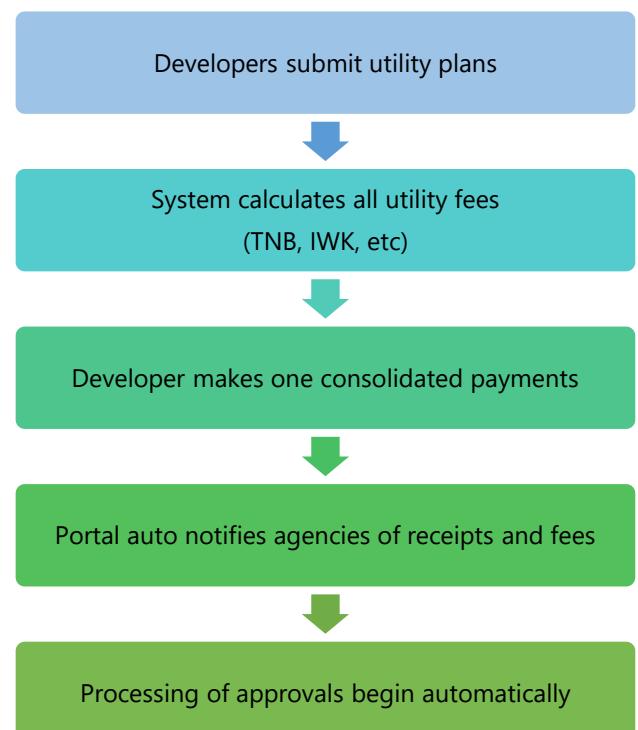
## 2. Digital Transformation

- In the longer term, One Stop Utility Agencies cannot operate effectively without full digital transformation.
- Their current role is at best an interim measure and may become redundant once comprehensive utility data mapping and digital systems are in place.
- An ideal transformation would replace the manual, fragmented approval process with a fully integrated, transparent and enforceable digital platform that supports planning, submissions, feedback, tracking and approvals.

## 3. Single Point Payment Gateway

- The industry suggests further improvement to the utility approval system through a single point payment gateway.
- Such a system offers several benefits:
  - Improved client experience, as developers no longer need to track and pay multiple agencies separately, reducing administrative burden and simplifying cash flow planning.
  - A single receipt showing the breakdown of payments to each agency.
  - Easier tracking of processing timelines or status of applications that are linked to payment status.
  - In a digital platform, it can trigger automated workflows, reducing the need for follow-ups.
  - Ideally, the system would cover all development approvals, including planning permission and building plans.
  - Single point payment systems are already in use in Singapore's CORENET X, New South Wales and the United Kingdom planning portals.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of a Single Point Payment Gateway for Utility Approvals in Malaysia



Source: REHDA Institute Research

## ■ Proposal

- It is timely for the country or respective State Authorities to pursue digital transformation to create a one-stop digital development approval platform rather than establishing new entities that are ineffective and costly.
- The platform should allow developers to submit utility permits and technical approvals, routing applications to the relevant utilities via an integrated interface.
- The system should integrate digital geospatial data and conflict detection, removing the need for manual coordination.
- It should also provide real-time feedback and status tracking.
- Ideally, the platform should feature a single submission interface for developers, integrated with other authorities, including live digital utility maps, status tracking and automatic real-time clash detection.

Table 3: Key Features of Singapore's CORENET X as a Feasible Benchmarking Platform.

Current Workflow	Replacement by Digital Transformation
Submission coordination	Single portal submission Programme Interface auto routing between system and utility agencies
Feedback	Real time comments within platform
Compilation of utility mapping data	Direct submission into the State Geographic Information System (GIS)
Approvals follow up	Automated workflow

Source: REHDA Institute Research

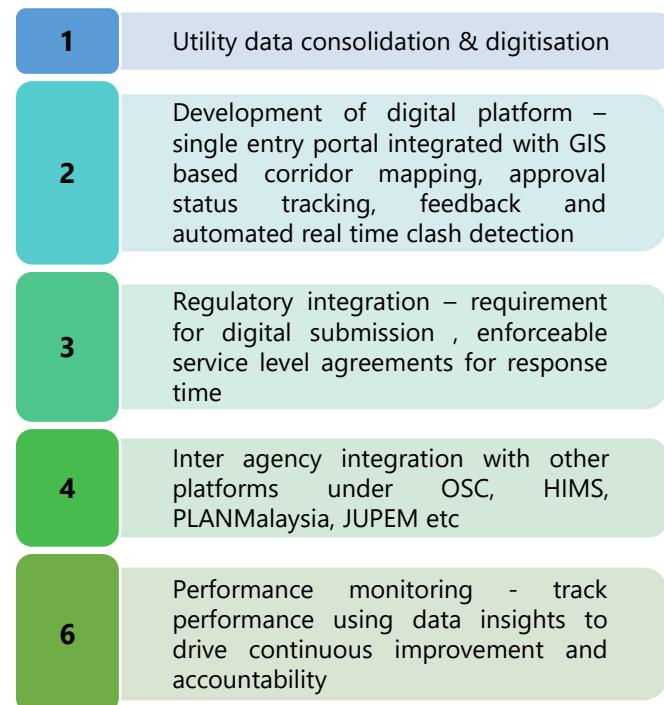
## Conclusion - Towards a Digital, Integrated Utility Approval Framework

A holistic approach, rather than piecemeal measures, is needed to create an efficient and effective utility approval ecosystem. The real solution is a centralised, legally empowered, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) - integrated utility coordination platform.

Although a longer-term process, this strategic move would simplify, automate and enforce approvals, improving efficiency, transparency and cost effectiveness.

The digital transformation can be implemented in phases, with the goal of achieving faster timelines, better compliance and streamlined processing. Importantly, more efficient management and coordination of utility planning, approvals and clash detection.

Figure 2: Proposed Roadmap for Transformation



Source: REHDA Institute Research

This transformation would shift the industry from a passive and paper-based approval process to one that is integrated, real time, transparent, efficient and cost effective. A detailed study on a digital and integrated utility approval framework is strongly recommended.

Global examples from Singapore, New South Wales and the United Kingdom show that fully integrated digital platforms remove the need for coordinating intermediaries and improve transparency, accountability and processing speed. Ultimately, digitalisation should redesign the approval ecosystem to deliver greater efficiency, speed and cost effectiveness.

## The Build-Then-Sell Trap: From Protection to Paralysis

### Why Build-Then-Sell (BTS) Should Not Be the Sole Housing Delivery System

Written by Noor Iman

*Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute*

#### Introduction

Housing delivery systems shape how risks, costs and responsibilities are shared, as well as the pace and affordability of housing supply. For over 50 years, Malaysia's Sell-Then-Build (STB) system, supported by strong legislation and monitoring, has delivered more than 6.4 million housing units and raised homeownership to 76%.

While recent proposals under the 13th Malaysia Plan to mandate Build-Then-Sell (BTS) as the exclusive housing delivery system are consumer-driven, adopting BTS as the sole model risks overlooking broader economic, financial and structural implications. This paper argues that BTS should not entirely replace STB and that alternative approaches are needed to balance buyer protection with sustainable housing supply.

#### Impact Analysis of the BTS System

House Prices & Supply Impact			
<b>1. Higher Financing Costs</b>			
• Under STB, developers fund projects using progressive payments from buyers at each construction stage, as per Schedules G & H of the Housing Development Act 1965 (Act 118).			
• Any shortfall is covered by bridging finance, which is repaid progressively as payments are received. BTS eliminates this cash inflow, requiring developers to fully fund projects through bank loans or internal corporate equity.			
• Full project financing increases developers' exposure, interest costs and compliance costs for larger credit facilities, while bigger loan amounts and longer tenures lead to higher overall financing costs.			
• Financing institutions perceive BTS-funded projects as riskier and impose stricter lending terms.			
• These additional financing costs are ultimately passed on to buyers, raising the price of completed housing units.			

A simplified illustration of increased financing costs affecting house prices is illustrated in the following Table 1. A separate finding from detailed cash flow analysis highlighting higher interests incurred throughout project duration is attached as Table 2.

Table 1: Simplified Illustration of Increased House Price under BTS

Cost Item	STB (RM per unit)	BTS (RM per unit)	Remarks
Land	50,000	50,000	Same cost
Construction cost	250,000	250,000	Same cost, without taking into account higher construction costs due to loss of economies of scale, smaller projects etc
Professional fees & preliminaries	35,000	35,000	Assuming same cost
Statutory Contributions	25,000	25,000	Assuming same cost
Financing cost STB: 30% x 3 years @ 8%p.a. BTS: 3 years @ 8% p.a.	29,520	98,400	STB applies bridging finance for shorter period; BTS requires full upfront financing for whole project tenure
Project Management	25,000	25,000	Assuming same cost
Marketing	10,000	10,000	Assuming same cost
Contingencies	15,000	15,000	Assuming same cost
Developer margin 12%	60,000	70,000	Assuming same target profit @12%
<b>Total Price</b>	<b>499,520</b>	<b>578,400</b>	<b>+15% price inflation under BTS due to change in financing model alone</b>

Source: REHDA Institute Research

Key takeaways from Table 1 are as follows:

1. Developers must carry interest until project completion, causing financing costs to more than triple under BTS.
2. Overall, a price increase of about 15% per unit is realistic if BTS were the sole delivery system, based solely on higher financing costs. Additional factors such as shrinkage, market pressure from limited new housing supply and increased investment risks could further raise production costs, bringing the total estimated increase to around 30% more compared to STB delivery.
3. This significantly reduces affordability, particularly for low- and middle-income buyers.

## Financial Feasibility STB vs BTS (Cash Flow)

- Hypothetical Project Details : 250 units apartments @ RM500,000 per unit on 1 acre land in Kuala Lumpur
- 30% Bumiputera quota; 5% Bumiputera discount.

Table 2: Cash flow Summary

	STB – Bridging Financing (RM)	BTS – Project Financing*(RM)
<b>Gross Development Value (GDV)</b>	123,125,000	123,125,000
<b>Total Development Costs (TDC)</b>	102,986,238	117,575,765
<b>Finance Charges / Costs of Funds (included in TDC)</b>	4,376,863	18,967,300*
<b>Gross Profit Over GDV</b>	16.36 %	4.51 %
<b>Positive Cashflow</b>	H1 Year 4	H1 Year 5
<b>BTS Pricing to get similar returns to STB</b>		575,000 (+16%)

\*All other costs constant. May include partial equity and partial loan

Source: REHDA Institute Research

## 2. Shrinking Project Sizes and Loss of Economies of Scale

- Under BTS, developers' capital is tied up for a longer period until project completion, prompting many to reduce launches to manage risk.
- Project financing under BTS requires higher equity, as loans rarely cover 100% of costs. Developers may need 40% equity and 60% term loan. Few can afford this, limiting project scale. For example, 2,000 units under STB may become 500 under BTS.
- This leads to smaller project sizes, reducing bulk purchasing power for materials, labour and services and weakening economies of scale.
- Smaller projects reduce bulk purchasing power, raising unit construction costs and prices, especially for affordable housing.
- Large-scale township developments become nearly unviable because of the high upfront capital required.

## 3. Reduced Supply

- BTS raises financial entry barriers, discouraging small and mid-sized developers and forcing existing players to cut back launches.
- Higher capital intensity limits the number of projects, reducing the number of launches and new housing supply.
- Supply shortages, especially in high-demand urban areas, push house prices upward.
- Greater market concentration among large developers further reduces affordability.
- Affordable housing is most affected due to low margins and reliance on progressive cash flows.

- Developers must complete projects sequentially and avoid new launches, making supply inelastic and driving prices higher.

## 3. Volatility and Cyclical Price Surges

- BTS makes housing supply slow to adjust to demand because projects depend on loans and take 3–5 years before generating positive cash flow for the next investment.
- During economic recoveries, strong demand meets limited new supply, causing prices to rise more sharply.
- In downturns, developers postpone projects, reducing opportunities for price correction and reinforcing affordability challenges.

## 4. Cross-Subsidisation Become Costlier

- In Malaysia, Bumiputera quota and price-controlled units are cross-subsidised by open-market units within the same project.
- Based on REHDA Institute's earlier research on "*Housing Forward- Understanding Costs and Sustainable Prices, 2021*", cross subsidies by market driven units towards quota and price-controlled housing total up to around 15% to 20% of selling price.
- BTS raises base costs, making cross-subsidisation even less viable and developers struggle to fulfil quota obligations, undermining affordability policy.

## Macroeconomic Impact

### 1. Elimination of Smaller Sized Firms & Industry Shrinkage

- A BTS-only system would strain developers' finances by increasing capital and financing needs.
- Many small and medium-sized developers would face tighter credit, higher costs and eventual market exit or forced consolidation, concentrating housing supply among large public-listed or Government-Linked Company (GLC) developers who are often absent in less urbanised cities or regions.
- This would reduce overall housing supply, particularly in affordable and mid-market segments, while limiting competition, innovation and adoption of technologies.
- From 2019 to 2023, an average of 1,100 new housing developer licenses were issued annually (source: *Jabatan Perumahan Negara*), with around 50 public listed companies active in residential development. Assuming half of new licenses go to these larger firms, about 550 small and medium-sized developers could exit the market each year.
- About 8.7% of Malaysia's 1.1 million Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) ( $\approx$ 95,700 firms) operate in construction (source: *SME Corporation Malaysia*), assuming 10% focus on residential development, roughly 9,570 firms could be affected by BTS. With an average of 30 employees per firm, around 287,000 jobs are at risk from fewer projects or potential industry exit.

## 2. Impact on Related Professionals & Built-Environment Services

- A BTS-only system would negatively impact professionals such as architects, engineers, planners, surveyors, project managers, valuers, lawyers, real estate agencies, consultants and Building Information Modeling (BIM) / Geographic Information Systems (GIS) vendors.
- Income stability would decline, affecting small firms first and eventually medium-sized practices.
- Smaller project sizes reduce economies of scale and limit productivity gains from BIM or industrialisation while longer payment cycles strain working capital.
- Downsizing or exits would weaken industry capacity and reduce opportunities for young talent.

## 3. Upstream & Downstream Industries (Multiplier Effects)

- The housing industry supports a wide range of upstream and downstream sectors.
- Reduced housing activity under a BTS-only system would lower order volumes, disrupt factory utilisation and raise unit costs as plants operate below optimal capacity.
- This would weaken multiplier effects across the economy, with a construction multiplier of about 1.98 times, reducing the residential sector's contribution to GDP, which stood at RM13.5 billion in 2024. (source: *Department of Statistics Malaysia*)

## 4. Employment & Skills

- The construction industry employs about 1.25 million workers across all skill levels (source: *Department of Statistics Malaysia*), with roughly half linked directly or indirectly to residential development.
- Around 13,622 professional firms of architects, engineers and land/quantity surveyors employ about 105,000 people. (source: *Department of Statistics Malaysia*)
- Under BTS, fewer projects would reduce jobs, erode skills as workers leave and restrict youth entry through apprenticeships and graduate intakes.
- Of 1.3 million tertiary students and 420,000 TVET trainees, roughly 120,000–130,000 could join the housing sector. (source: *Department of Statistics Malaysia*)
- With the industry already shrinking due to tighter financing and fewer new projects, BTS would further block employment pathways for new graduates and trainees, leaving thousands of aspiring professionals without entry into housing development.

## 5. Banking System & Credit

- STB allows part of project financing to be shared by buyers through progressive payments. BTS places nearly all construction risk on banks and developers' equity until completion.

## • Implications:

- Higher developer leverage: Upfront equity requirements, bigger term/project loan facilities, longer tenures, stricter covenants and concentration risk in bank loan books.
- Higher risks and tighter credit pricing: Increased margins and fees, higher borrowing costs and some banks may ration credit to smaller developers.
- Crowding-out: More credit allocated to BTS may limit lending to SMEs in other sectors during tight cycles.
- Systemic risk in downturns: Sales that underperform create refinancing risk and higher non-performing loan (NPL) probabilities.
- Banking and liquidity pressures: Banks' exposure rises, liquidity tightens and housing transactions slow due to fewer launches.
- Overall, BTS removes balanced risk sharing and places heavier pressure on the banking system and the wider economy.

## 6. Policy Objectives

- Higher costs under BTS would weaken cross-subsidies for affordable and Bumiputera units.
- Fewer large projects would make infrastructure cost-sharing harder and slow new area development.
- If private launches fall, fiscal stimulus will need more time and effort to revive the sector.

## Review of BTS Practice in Other Markets

<b>Singapore</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses STB system under strict regulation (Housing Developers Act, project account safeguards).</li> <li>• Consumer risks are mitigated without banning STB.</li> </ul>
<b>Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominantly 10:90 for off the plan units, supported by high mortgage availability; infrastructure readily laid by Government.</li> <li>• However, housing prices remain high and smaller developers are marginal players.</li> <li>• May include optional sunset clause where deposits are returned if sales target not met after a certain period.</li> </ul>
<b>China</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual reform towards BTS; STB (presales) and BTS (Sell After Built) co-exist.</li> <li>• STB uses progressive payments; developers can only withdraw 30% to 40% from escrow account for development costs and debt servicing.</li> <li>• Government supports BTS through bond issuance support often with Government backing, easier access to equity financing and special lending facilities.</li> </ul>

## Proposed Sustainable Alternatives

### 1. BTS and STB to Coexists

- Allow both STB and BTS to coexist, with regulatory safeguards for STB:

- Focus on enforcement not overhaul. Stricter licensing and monitoring based on track records and delivery performance.
- Tiered system for housing developers.

### 2. Targeted, Gradual and Incentivised BTS Application

- Adopt only phased or hybrid approaches rather than an immediate full shift to BTS.
- Provide incentives for BTS to reduce cost pressures, such as lower development charges, double tax allowances, reduced interest rates for project financing and special financing packages for buyers.
- Retain STB for mass-market and affordable housing, where supply responsiveness and cash flow are critical and for developers with proven track records.
- A gradual, incentivised transition of the housing delivery system helps cushion impacts on prices, supply and industry dynamics.

### 3. Financing Support

- Introduce loan facilities or development financing guarantees for smaller developers with good track record, enabling them to compete in voluntary BTS model.
- Use Government or State Development Company joint-venture schemes for price-controlled housing instead of relying solely on private developers.

### 4. Strengthen Buyer Protection – Project Monitoring

- Digital monitoring platforms for construction progress, housing development account transparency and enhanced inter agency cooperation.

## Conclusion

Mandating BTS as the sole housing system may protect buyers in theory but risks paralysing the industry, raising prices, reducing supply and increasing financial risks.

A sustainable solution is a balanced approach: retain STB with strict safeguards, apply BTS selectively and strengthen consumer protections through digital monitoring and housing development accounts.

This hybrid system ensures housing remains affordable, inclusive and financially sustainable while protecting both buyers and industry viability.

### 1. Practical Mitigations for BTS

- Use a hybrid model: retain regulated STB for mass-market and affordable projects and apply BTS only to high-risk segments.
- Support SMEs with Government-backed accounts, performance bonds and partial risk-sharing to maintain bankability.
- Anchor multi-phase townships through GLC or joint-venture partnerships to sustain demand in upstream industries.
- Strengthen buyer protection with escrow accounts, project monitoring, project progress disclosures and a 6-month cooling-off period without replacing progressive payment models.
- Ensure a sustainable ecosystem before BTS implementation, covering financing, taxation structure and incentives.

## World Class Sustainable Cities 2025: Resilient Cities Living Heritage

Written by Irdina Khairuddin  
*Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute*

On 30 September 2025, the 16th International Conference on World Class Sustainable Cities (WCSC) was held at the Royal Chulan Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The conference was organised by three professional bodies: the Malaysian Institute of Planners (MIP), the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (REHDA WPKL) and the Malaysian Institute of Architects (PAM). The event brought together policymakers, urban practitioners and thought leaders to explore pathways toward resilient, inclusive and regenerative cities. Discussions focused on how urban culture, climate resilience and smart technologies intersect to shape future-ready cities.



YB Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Housing and Local Government, delivering the opening speech at WCSC 2025.

The conference opened with a keynote by YB Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Housing and Local Government, who stressed that urban resilience goes beyond infrastructure to include cultural identity, heritage and social cohesion. He highlighted Malaysia's cultural diversity as a strategic asset and urged public housing and urban regeneration projects to balance climate adaptation, urban growth and local identity. He framed culture, sustainability and governance as key pillars of urban development.

### Keynote Address 1: City for All - Resilience and Heritage in KL2040

YBhg. Datuk Seri TPr. Dr. Maimunah binti Mohd Sharif, the then Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, outlined the city's progress under the Kuala Lumpur Local Plan 2040 and Climate Action Plan 2050. She highlighted Kuala Lumpur's commitment to delivering 305,000 affordable housing units by 2040, supported by higher-density development and inclusionary housing policies. Mobility goals include achieving 70% public transport usage by 2040, through expanded rail and bus networks, improved cycling infrastructure and better first- and last-mile connectivity.

On climate action, Kuala Lumpur aims for net-zero emissions by 2050, with a 70% reduction target by 2030. Efforts include LED street lighting, solar power for city buildings and cutting energy and water use by 25%. Upgrades to retention ponds and drainage systems have also significantly reduced flood hotspots. Cultural regeneration was also emphasised through the Warisan Kuala Lumpur initiative and the city's application to become a UNESCO Creative City of Design. These initiatives positioned heritage and the creative economy as key drivers of urban resilience.



YBhg. Datuk Seri TPr. Dr. Maimunah binti Mohd Sharif, the then Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, delivering her keynote address on the city's long-term urban, climate and heritage strategies at WCSC 2025.

### Keynote Address 2: Data-Driven Placemaking for Living Cities

Mr. Justin Lau and Mr. Philip Clark of The Oval Partnership (Hong Kong) focused on how data-driven placemaking can transform cities into vibrant, people-centred destinations. They emphasised that successful urban places depend on walkability, mixed uses, adaptable buildings and active public spaces, supported by evidence-based analysis.

Using digital tools such as movement mapping, footfall analysis and place impact indicators, their approach helps cities to measure how well places function over time. Case studies, including long-term regeneration projects in China, demonstrated how integrating heritage, culture and flexible public spaces can significantly increase pedestrian activity and economic vitality. In relation to Kuala Lumpur, they noted that the KL Local Plan 2040 provides a strong framework, but stressed the importance of tracking progress through clear, measurable indicators.



Mr. Justin Lau and Mr. Philip Clark of The Oval Partnership sharing insights on digital placemaking and urban vitality during their keynote at WCSC 2025.



YB Nga Kor Ming, Minister of Housing and Local Government, with key guests and organisers, officiates the launch of the event.

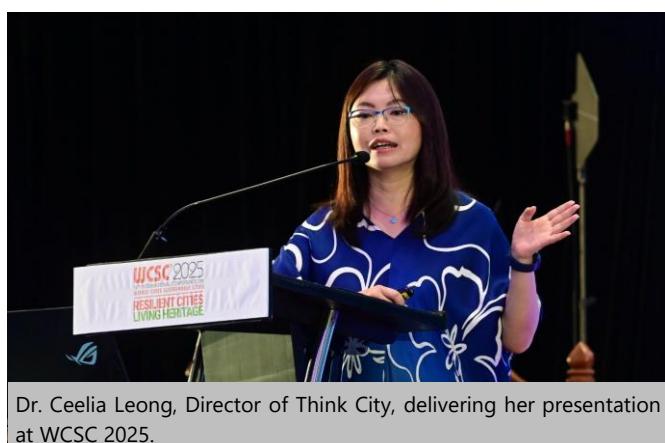
## Session 1: Culture as Catalyst — Revitalising Urban Identity and Community Life

Session 1 highlighted that culture is more than just heritage or pretty buildings and it's a key driver for making cities stronger, more resilient and more connected to their communities. As cities grow rapidly, it's important to preserve local identity and the memories that make each place unique.

### Living Heritage and Strategic Urban Regeneration

Dr Ceelia Leong, Director of Think City, shared insights from the Heritage Kuala Lumpur 2030 initiative, a long-term strategy aimed at revitalising Kuala Lumpur's historic core. She explained that despite significant infrastructure investments, Kuala Lumpur has faced declining livability, weakened city-centre vibrancy and a "donut city" effect caused by decentralisation. Heritage KL 2030 addresses these challenges by positioning living heritage as a catalyst for regeneration.

The initiative focuses on five strategic pillars, including authentic Malaysian identity, creative economy clusters, community well-being, walkability and harmony with nature. Flagship projects such as cultural districts, adaptive reuse of historic buildings and creative programming demonstrate how heritage can support economic activity while strengthening place identity and social inclusion. Dr Leong emphasised that successful regeneration requires collaboration between government agencies, private developers and civil society.



Dr. Ceelia Leong, Director of Think City, delivering her presentation at WCSC 2025.

## Creative Districts and Community Ownership

Regional perspectives were shared by Mr. Karin Kungwankitti, Director of Songkhla and Southern Region, Creative Economy Agency (CEA), Thailand. He presented the CEA framework that uses creative districts as testing grounds for culture-led regeneration. The approach combines strategic planning, co-creation with communities, creative business support and real-world experimentation.

The Charoen Krung District in Bangkok was highlighted as a key case study of a once-declining area that was revitalised through close collaboration between local designers, craftsmen, artists and residents. Interventions such as culturally themed street furniture, improved lighting and public art installations helped revive traditional businesses, attract new creative enterprises and strengthen community pride. The project demonstrated that culture-led regeneration can be scaled to other cities when local communities are actively involved and take ownership of change.



Mr. Karin Kungwankitti, Director of Songkhla and Southern Region, Creative Economy Agency, presenting at WCSC 2025.

## Session 2: Climate Adaptation and Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient Cities

The second session shifted focus to climate resilience, emphasising that nature-based solutions (NBS) are essential urban infrastructure. Cities today face multiple environmental challenges, from flooding and water insecurity to urban heat stress and NBS offers multifunctional benefits, working with natural systems rather than against them.

### City in Nature and Ecological Connectivity

Ms Ang Wei Ping, Group Director (Policy & Planning) at NParks, Singapore, presented the "City in Nature" approach. She highlighted how Singapore integrates nature across protected nature reserves, parks and buildings. Projects like Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park use naturalised waterways to manage floods, reduce heat, boost biodiversity and create quality public spaces. A key focus is ecological connectivity, whereby green spaces are integrated into an interconnected system that strengthens long-term climate resilience.



LAr. Khariza Abd Khalid, Chief Operating Officer of Gamuda Parks, presenting initiatives on sustainable urban parks and nature-based solutions for resilient cities.

## Malaysian Context: Water and Flood Resilience

From a Malaysian perspective, YBhg. Dato' Dr Nor Azizi Zakaria, Honorary Professor at Universiti Sains Malaysia and a River Engineering expert, shared decades of research on stormwater management and water security. He highlighted the paradox of Malaysia experiencing both abundant rainfall and frequent flooding, alongside water shortages. His work on constructed wetlands and integrated stormwater systems demonstrates how long-term planning with nature can reduce flood risks, improve water retention and operate with minimal maintenance over time.

LAr. Khariza Abd Khalid, Chief Operating Officer of Gamuda Parks, shared examples of large-scale park and wetland developments that integrate biodiversity conservation, flood management and community spaces. These projects illustrate how environmental resilience can align with economic planning, providing recreational value, supporting surrounding development and encouraging community stewardship.

## Session 3: Smart and Inclusive Technologies for Regenerative Urban Futures

The third session focused on the regenerative cities where urban environments that not only sustain but actively restore ecosystems and strengthen social systems. Speakers cautioned that while smart city technologies are useful, many initiatives remain fragmented and overly focused on monitoring rather than long-term transformation.

### Technology as an Enabler, Not an End Goal

Dr Mazlan Abbas, CEO of FAVORIOT, discussed the role of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies in supporting regenerative cities. He explained how sensors and data platforms can improve air quality monitoring, water management, energy efficiency and waste systems. However, he stressed that technology must be embedded within strong governance frameworks, with attention to data privacy, interoperability and equitable access.

Malaysia's ambition to become an AI-driven Nation by 2035 was referenced to highlight the importance of a human-centred approach. Speakers emphasised that digital innovation must improve quality of life, support inclusive growth and respect cultural context, rather than becoming technology for its own sake.



Dr. Mazlan Abbas, CEO of FAVORIOT, presenting Internet of Thing (IoT) solutions for smarter and more resilient cities.

## Conclusion

Across all three sessions, a clear theme emerged where sustainable and resilient cities are built through integration rather than silos. Culture provides identity and meaning, nature offers resilience and life-support systems and technology enables coordination, innovation and adaptive governance.

The WCSC 2025 discussions reaffirmed that achieving regenerative urban futures requires long-term commitment, collaborative partnerships and measurable action. For policymakers, developers and practitioners in Malaysia and the wider region, the lessons from WCSC offer a practical framework for creating cities that are not only sustainable, but truly life-enhancing for present and future generations.



From left: Ar. Adrianta bin Aziz (President of Malaysian Institute of Architects), Ms. Victoria Chua (Chairman of WCSC 2025), YB Nga Kor Ming (Minister of Housing and Local Government), YBhg. Datuk Seri TPr. Dr. Maimunah binti Mohd Sharif (The then Mayor of Kuala Lumpur), TPr. Hajah Mazrina Dato' Abdul Khalid (President of Malaysian Institute of Planners), Datuk Ir. Ho Hon Sang (President of REHDA Malaysia) and Datuk N K Tong (Immediate Past President of REHDA Malaysia), with fellow participants, marking the gathering at WCSC 2025.

## Snapshot: Household Income Survey Report Malaysia (2024)

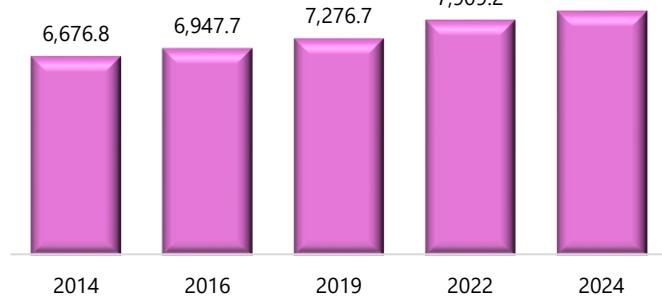
Written by Syuhada Saharizan  
Senior Executive, Research & Education  
REHDA Institute

On 8 October 2025, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) released the Household Income Survey Report Malaysia (2024), providing the latest data on **Malaysian citizens'** household incomes for 2024. The report also presented a comprehensive overview of the distribution, composition and structure of household income in the country. This article highlights the key findings, with a particular focus on Nation's household numbers and income trends.

### Number of Households

The number of households in Malaysia has shown a steady growth over the past decade, increasing from 6.677 million in 2014 to 8.213 million in 2024. This represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.1%, with an average annual increase of 153,591 households.

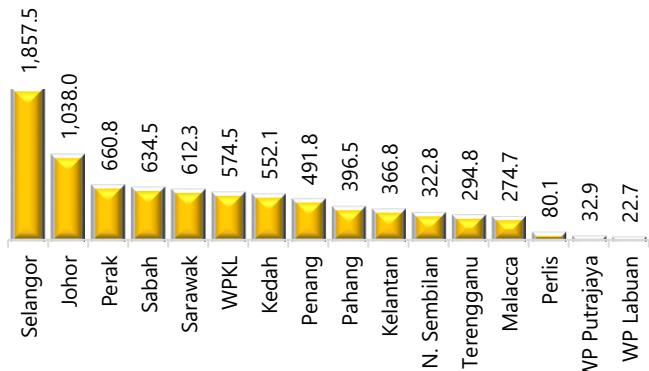
Figure 1: Number of Households ('000) - Malaysia (2014-2024)



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

By State, Selangor recorded the highest number of households at 1.858 million (percentage share: 22.6%), far surpassing all other States, followed by Johor with 1.038 million (12.6%) households. In contrast, the smallest numbers were observed in Perlis (0.080 million), WP Putrajaya (0.033 million) and WP Labuan (0.023 million).

Figure 2: Number of Households ('000) – State (2024)



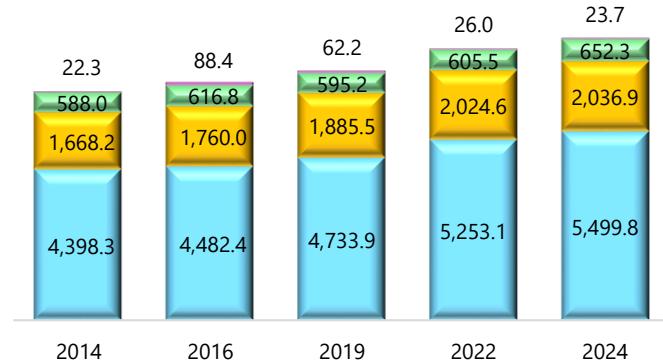
Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

In terms of ethnic group, **Bumiputera** consistently make up the largest portion, increasing steadily from 4.398 million (percentage share: 65.9%) in 2014 to 5.500 million (67.0%) in 2024, indicating sustained growth over the period. Chinese also showed a steady growth, rising from 1.668 million (25.0%) in 2014 to 2.037 million (24.8%) in 2024. Indians have a smaller but gradually increasing share, from 0.588 million (8.8%) in 2014 to 0.652 million (7.9%) in 2024. The Others category remains the smallest throughout the period, with only a slight increase from 0.022 million (0.3%) in 2014 to 0.024 million (0.3%) in 2024.

From 2014 to 2024, the CAGR indicates that **Bumiputera** households experienced the fastest growth at 2.3%, followed by the Chinese at 2.0%, Indians at 1.0% and the Others category at 0.6%. In absolute numbers, this translates to an average yearly increase of 110,151 **Bumiputera** households, 36,873 Chinese households, 6,427 Indian households and 140 households in the Others group.

Figure 3: Number of Households ('000) – Ethnic Group (2014-2024)

■ Bumiputera ■ Chinese ■ Indians ■ Others



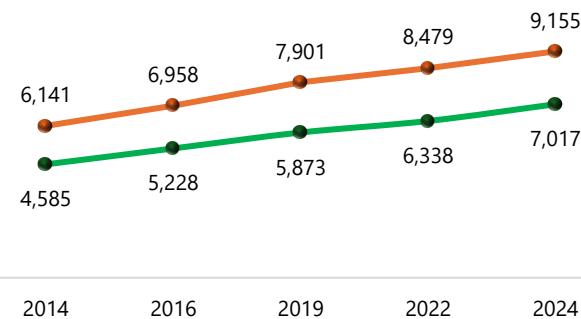
Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

### Median & Mean of Gross Monthly Household Income

Both median and mean gross monthly household incomes for Malaysian citizens increased steadily from 2014 to 2024. Median income rose from RM4,585 to RM7,017 with a CAGR of 4.3% while mean income grew from RM6,141 to RM9,155 with a CAGR of 4.1%.

Figure 4: Median & Mean Gross Monthly Household Income (RM) - Malaysia (2014-2024)

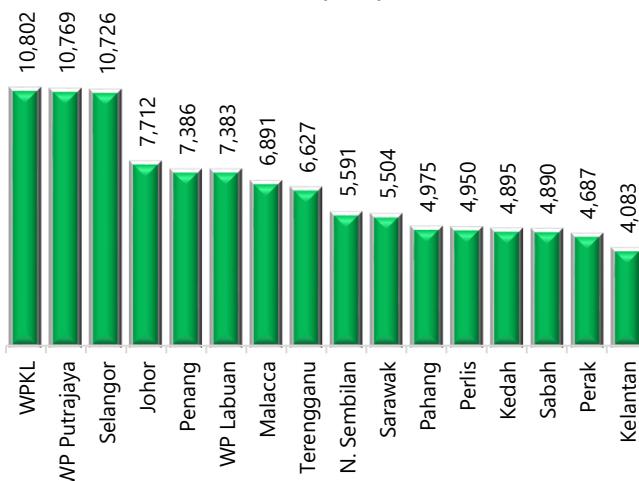
■ Median ■ Mean



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

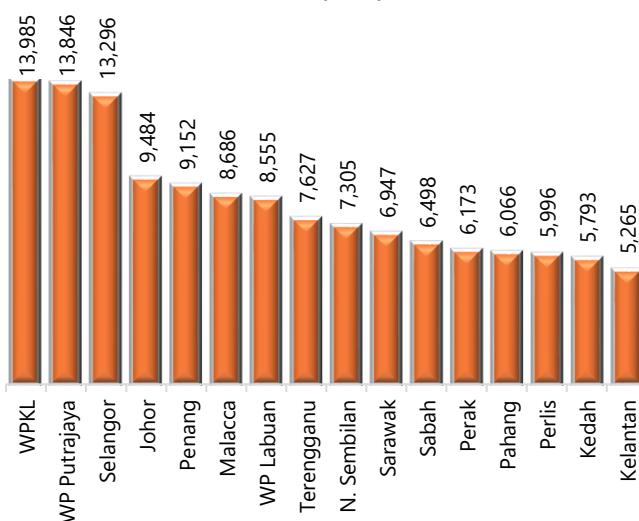
In terms of States, WPKL, WP Putrajaya and Selangor record the highest median household incomes with all exceeding RM10,000, while Kelantan is the lowest at RM4,083. A similar pattern emerges for mean income where WPKL, WP Putrajaya and Selangor again posted the highest figures at above RM13,000, while Kelantan remains the lowest at RM5,265.

**Figure 5: Median Gross Monthly Household Income (RM) – State (2024)**



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

**Figure 6: Mean Gross Monthly Household Income (RM) – State (2024)**

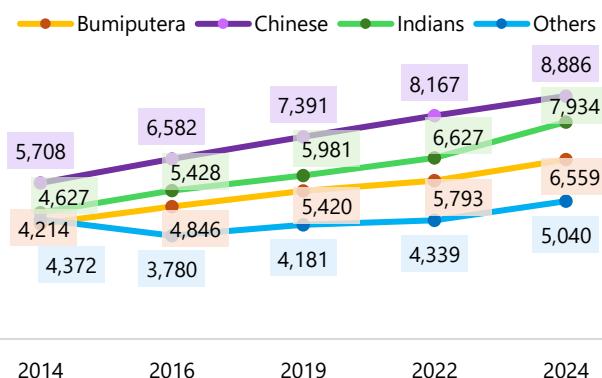


Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

By ethnic group, Chinese households continue to record the highest income levels throughout the period, with the median rising from RM5,708 in 2014 to RM8,886 in 2024 and mean income increasing from RM7,666 to RM11,494 over the same span. Indian households followed closely behind, from RM4,627 (median) and RM6,246 (mean) in 2014 to RM7,934 (median) and RM9,841 (mean) in 2024. *Bumiputera* households also showed steady growth, although at a relatively lower income level, increasing from RM4,214 to RM6,559 in median income and from RM5,548 to RM8,220 in mean income. The Others category remains the lowest income group but displays gradual improvement from RM4,372 to RM5,040 in median income and from RM6,011 to RM6,310 in mean income over the decade.

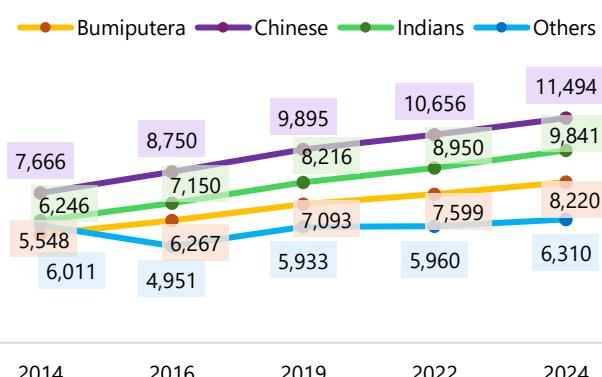
Based on CAGR from 2014 to 2024, Indians experienced the fastest rise in income levels (median: 5.5%, mean: 4.7%), showing the strongest upward movement among groups. *Bumiputera* and Chinese grew at similar rates (median: 4.5% each; mean: 4.0% and 4.1%, respectively), reflecting steady but moderate improvement in income levels over time. In contrast, the Others group recorded minimal growth (median: 1.4%, mean: 0.5%), indicating income levels remained relatively stagnant.

**Figure 7: Median Gross Monthly Household Income (RM) – Ethnic Group (2024)**



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

**Figure 8: Mean Gross Monthly Household Income (RM) – Ethnic Group (2024)**



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

## Gross Monthly Household Income by Income Group

According to the report, the threshold of monthly household income by household group in Malaysia for 2024 are as follows:

- B40: <RM5,860
- M40: RM5,860 – RM12,679
- T20: RM12,680

Using the above categories as a reference, the income classes for this analysis are grouped as follows:

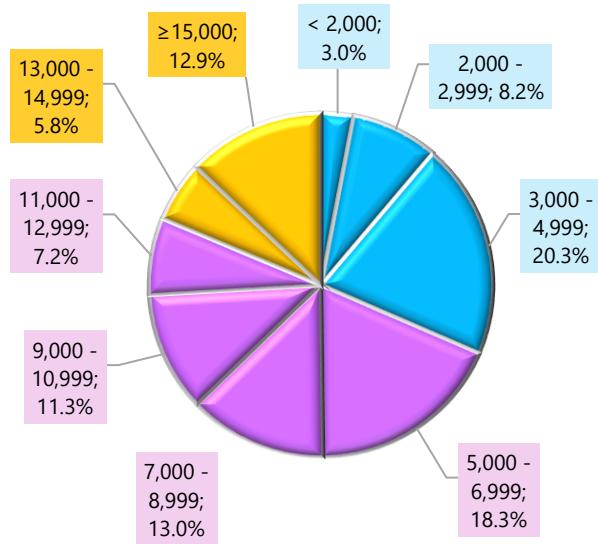
**Table 1: Category of Income Class**

Lower-Income Group	Middle-Income Group	High-Income Group
<RM5,000	RM5,000 – RM12,999	>RM12,999

Source: RI Research

The distribution of households shown in the figure below indicates that the middle-income group accounts for the largest share, with 49.8% of households earning between RM5,000 and RM12,999. The low-income category follows, representing 31.5% of households earning below RM5,000, while the high-income category comprises the smallest share at 18.7%, indicating relatively fewer households earn above RM12,999. This suggests that the majority of households are clustered in the lower to middle income brackets, with high-income households forming a minority.

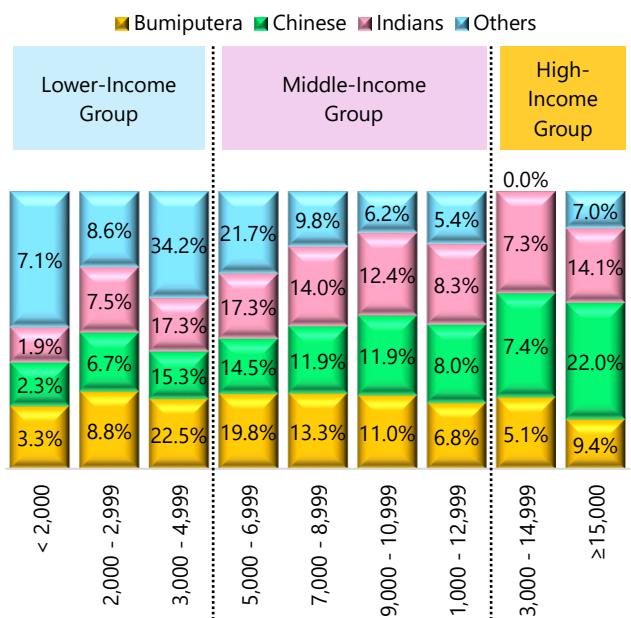
**Figure 9: Gross Monthly Household Income, Malaysia – % Share of Household (2024)**



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

By ethnic group, the Others category makes up the largest share within the lower-income range, peaking at 34.2% in the RM3,000–4,999 income bracket, followed by *Bumiputera* households at 22.5%. In the middle-income range, Indians record the highest combined share at 52.0%, with *Bumiputera* households close behind at 50.9%. For the higher-income brackets, the Chinese group accounts for the largest share at 29.4%, making them the most represented ethnic group in the top income categories.

**Figure 10: Gross Monthly Household Income, Malaysia – % Share of Household by Ethnic Group (2024)**



Source: Household Income Survey Report 2024, DOSM & RI Research

In summary, the 2024 Household Income Survey highlights Malaysia's continued progress in household growth and income expansion over the past decade, despite varying rates of improvement across States and ethnic groups. While the majority of households remain within the lower- and middle-income brackets, the steady rise in gross incomes reflects ongoing economic advancement and a gradual strengthening of household financial capacity. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, stakeholders and industry players as they work towards fostering more inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development nationwide.

Notes:

1. Gross income is the total amount of income earned by the household from all sources of income.
2. A household is defined as a person or group of related or unrelated people who usually live together and make common provisions for food and other living essentials.
3. Total may differ due to rounding.

Source: Household Income Survey Report Malaysia 2024, DOSM



## Incorporating Maintainability at the Design Stage to Reduce Rising Building Maintenance Costs in Malaysia

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Building design is inherently interdisciplinary and context-sensitive, shaped by factors such as climate, building type, site conditions, material selection, cultural heritage, local regulations and community needs. These factors require early and sustained collaboration among clients, developers, architects, engineers, contractors, suppliers and end-users to deliver holistically integrated solutions that satisfy structural, functional, aesthetic, environmental, safety and maintainability requirements. In the Malaysian context, however, evidence indicates that maintenance costs are rising and that a significant share of these lifecycle expenditures can be traced back to decisions made during the design and construction phases.

Recent research in Malaysia consistently demonstrates that design deficiencies, ageing building stock and weak maintenance practices are major contributors to escalating long-term maintenance burdens across diverse building types. Multiple empirical studies from Malaysia and regional reviews show that architectural and structural design flaws, poor material selection, inaccessible service areas and inadequate coordination during the design phase significantly increase the frequency and cost of maintenance interventions (Islam et al., 2021; Ahmad Shuhaimi et al., 2023; Khalid et al., 2024; Rahimin et al., 2024; Razak & Jaafar, 2012). These findings underscore the critical need to integrate maintainability considerations early in the design process to improve building performance, reduce lifecycle costs and mitigate the impact of ageing building stock.

Integrating maintainability into design isn't new, but it's becoming increasingly vital. Research and case studies across Malaysia show that early attention to maintainability can significantly reduce both the frequency and cost of maintenance interventions. A study on hospital buildings in Malaysia by Jaafar and Othman (2016) confirmed that considering maintainability at the design stage leads to fewer defects and lower operational and maintenance costs. Similarly, Impacts of Design Deficiencies on Maintenance Cost of High-Rise Residential Buildings and Mitigation Measures (Islam et al., 2021) revealed that architectural design deficiencies significantly increase maintenance costs in high-rise buildings and that early design interventions can effectively mitigate these issues. Furthermore, Enhancing Building Maintainability Through Early Supplier Involvement in the Design Process (Othman & Kamal, 2023) demonstrated that involving suppliers during the design phase improves maintainability and reduces life-cycle maintenance burdens.

Earlier studies also support these findings. For instance, Ismail and Mohammad (2015) highlighted that incorporating maintainability considerations into building design enhances cost-effectiveness throughout a building's life cycle. Likewise, Chong and Low (2006) reported that design-integrated maintenance could prevent nearly 66% of building defects. Thus, one promising solution to address high maintenance costs is to ensure the integration of maintainability principles into building design from the outset. Therefore, practical design measures such as accessible service corridors, modular components, durable materials, and supplier involvement during the design phase have been shown to minimize defects and extend building lifespan. In simple terms, the cost of designing for maintainability is far lower than the cost of repairing a poor design.

Considering maintainability from the start allows buildings to perform better and age more gracefully with fewer defects and disruptions. Simple choices made during the design stage, such as ensuring easy access for repairs, selecting durable materials and planning clear layouts, can make a big difference over time. The way a building is designed today ultimately determines how much it will cost to maintain in the future. The table below highlights finding from my research on the key design factors that have the strongest influence on achieving cost-effective building maintenance (CEBM).

Factor	Impact on Maintenance
<b>Accessibility</b>	Easy access reduces time and cost for inspections and repairs.
<b>Durability</b>	Long-lasting materials lower replacement and repair costs.
<b>Simplicity</b>	Simple layouts and systems reduce maintenance complexity.
<b>Modularisation</b>	Modular design shortens repair time and limits disruption.
<b>Identification</b>	Clear labelling and documentation improve service efficiency.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Energy-efficient and sustainable materials reduce long-term costs.

In addition to the above, other factors such as cleanability (easy-to-clean surfaces reduce maintenance frequency and improve building hygiene), availability of materials (readily available materials minimise repair delays and lower maintenance costs) and standardisation (use of standardised components simplifies repairs and ensures compatibility during maintenance) have also been justified being somehow reliable based on previous studies and expert panels opinions.

**Developers and design teams can make buildings easier to maintain by setting clear guidelines in their design briefs and agreements. Involving maintenance experts early in the design process helps ensure that building systems are practical and easy to service. Choosing materials and systems based on life-cycle costs, rather than just upfront prices, creates better long-term value.** These steps move spending to the early stages of a project, investing a little more in good design and coordination to avoid much higher maintenance costs in later phase. In Malaysia, rising maintenance costs are not unavoidable; they are often the result of design choices. When maintainability becomes a design priority, buildings perform better, cost less to run, and hold their value longer. In the end, designing for maintainability isn't just good engineering, it's a smart step toward a more sustainable building industry in Malaysia.

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## Why Do Mixed Developments Have Different Maintenance Charges? Understanding Subsidiary Management Corporations and Limited Common Property

Written by Dr Teo Jes She

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If you live in a mixed development—say, one that combines residential units above retail, hotel, or office spaces, you've probably noticed that not everyone pays the same maintenance charges. Ever wondered why? The answer lies in two key concepts under Malaysia's Strata Law: **Limited Common Property (LCP)** and **Subsidiary Management**.

### Shared Spaces, Shared Costs

In any strata development, whether residential, commercial or mixed-use, there are areas that all proprietors own and use together. These are called common property and they typically include corridors, staircases, lobbies, guardhouses, driveways, landscaped areas and shared building systems. Every proprietor contributes to maintaining these shared areas through maintenance charges collected by the Management Corporation (MC).

However, not all facilities are shared equally. In a mixed-use development, retail owners might have their own parking bays, service lifts and air-conditioning systems, while residents enjoy facilities such as the swimming pool, gym and playground that retailers never use. That's where the concept of LCP and Subsidiary Management Corporations (Sub-MCs) comes in.

### LCP and Sub-MCs

LCP refers to parts of the common property that are reserved for exclusive use of certain proprietors, not all proprietors within the strata development. Think of it as "shared spaces within shared spaces." Examples include parking areas reserved for retail tenants, rooftop gardens shared by certain blocks or residents-only swimming pools. The idea is simple: those who benefit from a facility should also pay for its upkeep. This helps avoid cross-subsidies where, for example, retail owners end up paying for the residents' swimming pool they never use.

Section 17A of the Strata Titles Act was introduced in 2013 to empower the MC to designate certain parts of the common property as LCP and to establish one or more Sub-MCs. These provisions were already incorporated into the Strata Titles Act 1985 and operate in tandem with the Strata Management Act 2013 (Act 757). The objective is to represent the distinct interests of parcel proprietors who share and benefit from specific facilities within a development.

### Illustrative Examples

Consider a mixed development comprising a retail podium at the lower levels with residential towers above.

- **Retail owners** use their own parking bays, service lifts and air-conditioning systems.
- **Residential owners** enjoy shared amenities such as a swimming pool, gym, and function hall.

To ensure fairness in cost allocation, the MC may designate the retail service areas as LCP to be managed by a Retail Sub-MC, while the residential facilities are designated as another LCP under a Residential Sub-MC. This designation ensures that each group of proprietors contributes only to the maintenance of the facilities they exclusively use.

### Establishing LCP and a Sub-MC

The establishment of an LCP and Sub-MC follows a prescribed legal process:

#### Comprehensive Resolution

The MC must first obtain approval at a general meeting through a comprehensive resolution supported by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the aggregate share units of all proprietors.

#### Preparation of Special Plan

Upon approval, the MC engages a licensed land surveyor to prepare a special plan that:

- Clearly delineates the boundaries of the designated LCP and
- Identifies the parcels entitled to the exclusive use and benefit of that area.

#### Survey Approval

The special plan is submitted to the Director General of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (JUPEM) for approval to ensure it complies with all technical and statutory requirements.

#### Registration of LCP and Sub-MC

Following JUPEM's endorsement, the MC applies to the State Director of Lands and Mines (PTG) for registration of the LCP and issuance of the Certificate of Subsidiary Management Corporation, which formally establishes the Sub-MC.

#### First AGM of the Sub-MC

The MC must convene the first Annual General Meeting of the Sub-MC within one month to elect its management committee. From this point, the Sub-MC becomes a legally constituted body empowered to manage the LCP, including the collection of service charges and decision-making on maintenance matters. Failure to convene the first AGM constitutes an offence under the Strata Titles Act 1985. The Commissioner of Buildings (COB) may appoint a person to convene the meeting, with costs borne by the MC. Continued non-compliance may result in penalties of up to RM50,000, imprisonment of up to three years, or both.

# RI IN TOUCH

## Conclusion

In conclusion, LCP and Sub-MCs under the Strata Titles Act enhances fairness and transparency in managing mixed developments. By allowing each component such as residential, retail, or office blocks to maintain and fund their own shared facilities, these mechanisms reduce cross-subsidies and potential disputes.

For property managers, understanding the proper process of establishing and administering a Sub-MC is essential to ensure legal compliance and efficient management. Early identification of potential LCP boundaries during the planning stage can also help developers streamline future management and avoid conflicts in later management stages.



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## Field Visit and International Real Estate Development Forum: MRED Students in Surabaya and Malang, Indonesia, on 4th – 9th December 2025

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A field visit and academic engagement programme was organised by the Faculty of Accountancy and Management (FAM), Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) in Surabaya and Malang, Indonesia, from 4th to 9th December 2025. The programme involved nine Master of Real Estate Development (MRED) students and was academically coordinated by two lecturers, Dr. Nurhayati and Ms. Nur Hafizah from UTAR.

The programme aimed to provide students with international exposure to real estate development practices while strengthening academic collaboration between Malaysian and Indonesian higher education institutions. All site visits throughout the programme were coordinated with the support of Institut Teknologi Nasional (ITN) Malang, contributing to the smooth execution of the academic and industry engagement activities. The delegation was also accompanied by an ITN (Malang) representative, Ir. Dr. Maranatha W. Wijayaningtyas, ST, MMT, PhD, ASEAN Eng, who provided valuable coordination and support throughout the visits.

### Site Visit to Pakuwon Group, Surabaya, Indonesia

The programme commenced on 4th December 2025 with a site visit to Pakuwon Group, one of the most prominent property developers in Surabaya, recognised for its extensive portfolio of integrated townships and mixed-use developments. The UTAR delegation was warmly welcomed by Mrs. Irawulan, Operations Manager of the Pakuwon City Project, together with her project team.

The visit began with a detailed briefing on the company's background, development philosophy and overall project portfolio, with particular emphasis on the planning approaches adopted for large-scale integrated developments. During the session, the delegation engaged in focused discussions with the project team, allowing students to gain deeper insights into project planning processes, development challenges, stakeholder coordination and practical decision-making in real-world development settings. These interactions provided students with valuable industry perspectives that complemented their academic learning.



Photo with Mrs. Irawulan (fourth from left in the first row), Operations Manager of the Pakuwon City Project, taken during a site visit to one of Surabaya's leading developers, Pakuwon Group.

Following the briefing, the delegation participated in a guided tour of the developer's latest projects within Pakuwon City, including Park Shanghai at Pakuwon City Mall. The site tour enabled students to observe firsthand the implementation of mixed-use development concepts, urban design principles and placemaking strategies aimed at creating vibrant commercial and lifestyle environments. Overall, the visit offered meaningful experiential learning by linking theoretical knowledge with professional practice in large-scale real estate development.



Visit to Park Shanghai at Pakuwon City Mall.

## Site Visit to Citraland Puncak Tidar Malang, Indonesia

On 5th December 2025, the delegation visited Citraland Puncak Tidar Malang, a leading residential property developer in Malang known for its integrated townships and lifestyle-oriented developments. The visit was hosted by Mr. Deddy Hasli Hidayat, General Manager of Citraland Puncak Tidar Malang, together with his project team.

The session commenced with a comprehensive project briefing delivered by Project Architect Ms. Astari Hapsari Putri and Mr. Deddy Hasli Hidayat. The briefing provided an overview of the project's development vision, master planning concept, market positioning and target segments, while highlighting key planning considerations, including land use arrangement, infrastructure provision, design principles and sustainability initiatives adopted in the development.



Photo with Mr. Deddy Hasli Hidayat (third from right in the first row), General Manager of Citraland Puncak Tidar Malang, taken during a site visit to one of Malang's prominent developers.

The visit continued with a guided site tour of the latest residential development within Citraland Puncak Tidar Malang. During the site tour, students observed firsthand the implementation of residential planning strategies, architectural design elements, branding approaches and environmental considerations in an active development setting. Interaction with the developer and project team enabled students to better understand practical challenges in residential development, including market demand, project phasing and quality control.

## International Real Estate Development Forum 2025

The academic highlight of the programme took place on 6th December 2025, with the International Real Estate Development Forum 2025, held at the LPKU Seminar Room, ITN Malang. The forum was attended by approximately 50 participants, comprising undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as academic staff.

Seven MRED students who are enrolled in the Seminar in Property Development course (MKOR15404) served as panellists, namely Mr. Zulhimi Zainal Abidin, Ms. Jen Liyen, Mr. Warren Ng, Mr. Khairul Anuar Jaafar, Ms. Chloe Loh, Mr. Rizam Daud and Ms. Pang Jie Xin, sharing their perspectives on contemporary real estate development issues. The theme of the forum was "Shaping the Future of Real Estate through Innovation, Sustainability and Policy."



Site visit to a show unit at Citraland Puncak Tidar, Malang.

The forum was structured into two panel discussions. Panel Discussion 1 focused on Driving Sustainability in Real Estate: Innovations, Practices and Policies, while Panel Discussion 2 explored Reimagining Cities through Inclusive Policy and Regenerative Development. Both panel sessions were moderated by the course lecturers, Dr. Nurhayati Md Khair and Ms. Nur Hafizah Juhari from UTAR, who guided the discussions and facilitated meaningful academic engagement. The sessions enabled active knowledge exchange across different academic levels. The forum was also joined by other MRED students, Mr. Wong Shung Yen and Mr. Muhammad Ali, further enriching the academic discussions.



Group photo with all panellists, committee members and participants, featuring Prof. Dr. Ir. Sutanto Hidayat, Head of Programme (first from left in the first row) and Prof. Dr. Ir. Lalu Mulyadi, MT, Postgraduate Director (second from left in the first row).

The forum was attended by senior representatives of ITN Malang, including Vice Rector III, Dr. Hardiaonto, ST, MT, Dean, Dr. Debby Budi Susanti, ST, MT, Postgraduate Director, Prof. Dr. Ir. Lalu Mulyadi, MT and Prof. Dr. Ir. Sutanto Hidayat, Head of Programme. The event was sponsored by the FAM, UTAR and jointly organised in collaboration with ITN Malang.



Photo taken with all students involved as Panelists during the public forum MRED students (second from left in the second row) Mr. Khairel Anuar, Ms. Chloe Loh, Ms. Pang Jie Xin, Mr. Zulhilmi, Mr. Warren Ng, Mr. Mohd Rizam and Ms. Jen Li Yen.

## Mount Bromo Excursion

On 7th December 2025, the delegation had the opportunity to visit Mount Bromo, one of Indonesia's most iconic active volcanoes located within the Bromo Tengger Semeru National Park. The visit offered participants a unique experience of an active volcanic landscape, providing valuable exposure to natural hazard management, environmental conservation and sustainable tourism practices in a sensitive ecological setting. Beyond its geological significance, the visit also allowed students to appreciate how natural heritage sites are integrated into regional tourism development while balancing safety, preservation and community interests.



Group photo at the Bromo Sunrise View Point.

## Surabaya City Excursion

On 8th December 2025, the delegation travelled back to Surabaya for the final segment of the programme. The visit included a cultural walk through Kota Tua Surabaya, where students were exposed to the city's historical urban fabric and heritage conservation efforts, offering a contrast to modern real estate development observed during earlier site visits.

The programme continued with a visit to selected shopping malls in Surabaya, allowing students to observe contemporary retail development, tenant mix strategies, and the role of commercial centres in supporting urban lifestyles and economic activity. On 9th December 2025, the journey also included crossing the SURAMADU Bridge, providing a firsthand exposure to a major infrastructure project that plays a key role in regional connectivity between Surabaya and Madura.

The visit concluded with preparations for departure to Kuala Lumpur, marking the end of a comprehensive academic and experiential learning programme that combined industry exposure, academic engagement, and cultural appreciation.



Group photo at the Kota Tua, Surabaya.

## Conclusion

Overall, the field visit and International Real Estate Development Forum 2025 provided meaningful international exposure for students in the Master of Real Estate Development (MRED) programme at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. By integrating industry visits with structured academic discussion, the programme enhanced students' understanding of real estate development practices, sustainability and urban development within an international context.

## EXPERIENCED GUEST SPEAKERS



# Master of **REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT** (MRED)

(N/345/7/1108) 11/26 (MQA/SWA13063)

## ADMISSION IS NOW OPEN

### WHY YOU SHOULD ENROLL

- Experienced Guest Speakers:** Learn from industry captains with extensive real-world experience.
- Hands-On Learning:** Engage in practical projects and case studies.
- Networking Opportunities:** Connect with professionals and peers in the property development sector.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION



## REHDA Institute 2026 Event Calendar (Tentative)

No	Date	Event	Venue
1	6 & 7 January 2026 (Wednesday & Thursday)	<b>Land Acquisition &amp; Development Masterclass</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk through the full land development cycle - feasibility, acquisition, approvals, financing, and risk management.</li> <li>Gain insights from JKPTG, PLANMalaysia, JUPEM, OSC, and leading legal and financial experts.</li> <li>Gain insights on current issues and case law on land ownership, categories and restrictions, joint ventures, fraud risks, etc.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
2	15 January 2026 (Thursday)	<b>CEO Series 2026: Economy &amp; Business Forum</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get the latest economic outlook for Malaysia and ASEAN in 2026</li> <li>Speakers include top CEOs, economists, and policy experts on key business trends</li> <li>Understand how macroeconomic shifts will impact investment and development</li> </ul>	Le Meridien, Petaling Jaya
3	5 February 2026 (Thursday)	<b>2026 Updates: Tax Law Decisions Impacting Property Developers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the latest tax rulings and court decisions that directly affect property development projects in Malaysia.</li> <li>Identify key compliance risks, opportunities, and implications for structuring deals, joint ventures, and project financing.</li> <li>Gain practical insights from tax and legal experts to navigate upcoming changes and safeguard your development strategies.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
4	10 & 11 March 2026 (Tuesday & Wednesday)	<b>Strata Management Seminar (Module 2)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get a clear overview of the Strata Management Act 2013 (Act 757)</li> <li>Understand key responsibilities of developers, management bodies, and strata owners in the early stages of strata development.</li> <li>Learn practical steps to manage compliance, maintenance charges, and dispute resolution effectively.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
5	15 & 16 April 2026 (Wednesday & Thursday)	<b>Malaysia Property Development Process Masterclass (MPDP) Certification Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive certification covering Malaysia's property development process from land to sales &amp; marketing.</li> <li>Learn from industry experts through real-world case studies and practical insights.</li> <li>Equip yourself with essential knowledge to navigate approvals, financing, marketing, and project delivery confidently.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
6	27-29 May or 3-5 June 2026 (Tuesday – Thursday)	<b>Asia Real Estate Leaders (AREL) London, UK Study Trip</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain insights from London's pioneering approaches in affordable housing delivery, urban regeneration, and large-scale mixed-use developments.</li> <li>Explore innovative financing, public-private partnerships, and policy frameworks that have shaped London's real estate landscape.</li> <li>Strengthen collaboration with UK-based institutions, developers, and policymakers on sustainable urban planning and community-oriented growth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tentative focus areas &amp; sites:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>King's Cross Regeneration – A flagship urban regeneration project showcasing mixed-use, transport connectivity, and heritage conservation.</li> <li>Canary Wharf – A global financial hub integrating commercial, residential, and retail developments.</li> <li>Nine Elms / Battersea Power Station Redevelopment – One of Europe's largest regeneration schemes with affordable housing and community integration.</li> <li>London Olympic Park (Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park) – A model for legacy planning, housing delivery, and sustainable urban design.</li> </ul>	London, UK

**Note:**

1. Event dates are subject to change depending on the speaker's availability.
2. There will be room for new additional events on an ad-hoc basis.

No	Date	REHDA Institute 2026 Event Calendar (Tentative)	Venue
7	23 June 2026 (Tuesday)	<p><b>Malaysia Property Sales &amp; Marketing Leaders Summit 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the latest sales and marketing strategies shaping Malaysia's property industry.</li> <li>Learn how digital tools, AI, and data-driven insights are transforming buyer engagement and conversion.</li> <li>Connect with industry leaders in an exclusive platform to exchange ideas and uncover new growth opportunities.</li> <li>Closed-door brainstorming session with 100 Heads of Marketing and Sales from the Property Development Sector</li> </ul>	Hotel Venue TBC
8	7 July 2026 (Tuesday)	<p><b>ESG in Real Estate Masterclass 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain a practical understanding of ESG frameworks, reporting standards, and regulatory requirements shaping the property and construction sector.</li> <li>Learn from case studies on how developers and investors integrate ESG into project planning, financing, and long-term value creation.</li> <li>Build strategies to future-proof your organization by aligning sustainability goals with business growth and stakeholder expectations.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
9	23 July 2026 (Thursday)	<p><b>Strata Title Application &amp; Statutory Compliance (Housing Development and Strata Management) for Property Developers (Module 3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolution of Strata Development in Malaysia</li> <li>Sophistication of Strata Development (types and potential mutation)</li> <li>Strata Title Application Process (Subdivision of Building)</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
10	11 August 2026 (Tuesday)	<p><b>Seminar: Modern Construction Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the latest modern construction technologies transforming Malaysia's real estate and housing sector.</li> <li>Understand how IBS, modular systems, and digital tools like BIM and AI improve speed, cost, and quality.</li> <li>Learn from practical case studies on delivering smarter, greener, and more efficient projects.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
12	22 September 2026 (Tuesday)	<p><b>Regional Housing and Urban Living Conference 2026</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackling housing affordability and policy challenges across the region.</li> <li>Exploring smart, sustainable, and people-centric urban living solutions.</li> <li>Featuring leading speakers from Singapore, Australia, and China to share best practices in housing and urban development.</li> </ul>	Hotel Venue TBC
13	13 October 2026 (Tuesday)	<p><b>Digital Marketing Forum in Real Estate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discover how AI, data analytics, and social platforms are transforming the way developers market and sell properties.</li> <li>Learn proven digital strategies to attract buyers, nurture leads, and accelerate project sales in a competitive market.</li> <li>Hear case studies and insights from leading developers, agencies, and tech experts on driving results through digital innovation.</li> </ul>	Wisma REHDA
14	Mid-November 2026 (Dates TBC)	<p><b>Asia Real Estate Leaders (AREL) China (Options: Shenzhen, Chongqing, Shanghai)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain insights from China's cutting-edge urban transformation, including large-scale regeneration, transit-oriented development (TOD), and smart city initiatives.</li> <li>Explore innovative financing models, industrial park growth, and public-private partnerships that continue to drive China's real estate and industrial expansion.</li> <li>Strengthen collaboration with leading Chinese developers, policymakers, and institutions on sustainable mega-city and regional development.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tentative focus areas and sites:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shenzhen: Innovation-driven industrial clusters, technology parks, and the Greater Bay Area's integration model.</li> <li>Chongqing: Liangjiang New Area (industrial &amp; logistics hub), Chongqing Tiandi (heritage regeneration), and Raffles City Chongqing (iconic mega mixed-use).</li> <li>Shanghai: Lujiazui Financial District, Pudong smart city initiatives, and landmark mixed-use waterfront redevelopments.</li> </ul>	China (Options: Shenzhen, Chongqing or Shanghai)

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2. There will be room for new additional events on an ad-hoc basis.