

MRED NETWORKING SESSION AT WISMA REHDA ON 15 JUNE 2026

A very good afternoon to

- President of UTAR, Ir. Prof. Dato' Dr. Ewe Hong Tat and his team;
- President of REHDA Malaysia, Datuk Ho Hon Sang (*to be confirmed on attendance*);
- Board of Trustees of REHDA Institute (*to be confirmed on attendance*);
- Guest Speakers, Graduates and Students of MRED programme;
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of REHDA Institute and UTAR, I would like to warmly welcome all of you to the MRED Networking Session this afternoon.

Thank you very much for taking the time to join us today. We truly appreciate your support and participation.

The MRED programme was established with a very clear objective — to bridge the gap between academia and industry and to develop professionals who are not only academically equipped, but also grounded in the real challenges and realities of the real estate and housing development industry.

When REHDA Institute first engaged with UTAR and curated this programme back in 2017, we recognised that the real estate industry was evolving rapidly and becoming increasingly multidisciplinary. Today, the industry is no longer just about building and selling properties. It involves ESG, sustainability, digitalisation, finance, stakeholder management, regulatory compliances and increasingly, the ability to think strategically across multiple disciplines.

Because of this, MRED was designed specifically for working professionals — to create a platform where industry practitioners from different backgrounds can come together to learn, exchange perspectives and better understand the broader development ecosystem.

Personally, I have always found one of the most inspiring parts of this programme to be the opportunity to engage directly with the students and graduates themselves.

Just recently, during the MRED Graduation Ceremony held at UTAR Kampar campus on 10 April 2026, as well as during the annual Industry Advisor engagement sessions with the students and UTAR faculty members at the Sungai Long Campus, I had the opportunity to speak with many graduates and students from different professional backgrounds. What encouraged me most was seeing their eagerness to continuously learn, improve themselves and contribute more meaningfully to the industry.

At the same time, many of the conversations also reflected the realities and pressures faced by the industry today — the increasing complexity of development processes, changing workforce expectations, rising compliance demands, talent retention challenges and the growing need for professionals who are able to adapt to technological and market changes.

One of the biggest changes we are seeing today is the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). Whether we like it or not, AI is already changing the way businesses operate. Tasks that used to take hours can now be completed much faster through automation and data analytics. As AI becomes more integrated into our daily work, the value of human talent will increasingly lie not just in technical knowledge, but in critical thinking, judgement, creativity, problem-solving and the ability to work across different disciplines.

On top of that, the property industry itself is evolving. Many developers today are no longer focused solely on residential developments. We are seeing more companies expanding into mixed-use developments, industrial and logistics developments, data centres and other recurring income businesses. As business models evolve, so too do the skills and capabilities required of the workforce.

Personally, I believe one of the most urgent needs in the industry today is talent transformation. The industry does not only need technical specialists anymore. We need professionals and future leaders who are adaptable, multidisciplinary, digitally aware, commercially minded and capable of navigating increasingly complex urban, economic, environmental and regulatory challenges.

We also need stronger collaboration between industry and academia to ensure that talent development keeps pace with how quickly the industry itself is evolving.

That is why we felt it was important and timely to organise this inaugural session, not merely as a networking event, but as a platform for meaningful dialogue between industry and academia.

We hope today's discussion will allow us to openly exchange perspectives on:

- the future skills and competencies needed by the industry;
- current talent and leadership challenges;
- how we can better prepare future professionals; and
- how industry and academia can collaborate more strategically moving forward.

We are also very pleased to have HR representatives and industry leaders with us today. Your insights are extremely valuable in helping us better understand the evolving needs of the industry, so that programmes like MRED can continue to remain relevant, practical and industry-driven.

I would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our guest speakers for their contribution to the programme, which sets MRED apart and makes it a truly unique programme.

To our graduates and students, we hope this session will also provide an opportunity for you to build meaningful connections, exchange ideas and learn from one another's experiences.

Ultimately, our hope is that this session can contribute, even in a small way, towards strengthening the future talent pipeline for Malaysia's real estate and housing industry.

Once again, thank you very much for being here this evening. We truly appreciate your support and participation.

I wish everyone a fruitful discussion and an enjoyable networking session ahead.

Thank you.