

# Recognising Our Technologists & Technicians: The Wait is Finally Over

*Adapted from the Officiating Speech given by YB Datuk Seri Panglima Madius Tangau, Minister of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), at the Malaysia Board of Technologist (MBOT) Launching Ceremony, on 17th November 2016, Bank Rakyat Convention Centre.*

**MOSTI**, which was founded 42 years ago (in 1973) as the Ministry of Technology, Research and Local Government, has been tasked with an important responsibility, which is to spearhead the country's science, technology, and innovation (STI) agenda. We know that the mastery of STI amongst the people of a country is the benchmark of the economic progress of the country. In developed nations, the level of STI awareness and mastery amongst the people is high compared to the level in developing countries. MOSTI moves in tandem with the government's Transformation Programme by declaring that the period between 2010 and 2020 to be the 'National Innovation Decade'. The Innovation Decade 2010-2020 headed by MOSTI is an integrated platform that aims to strengthen the country's STI agenda, with the hope that Malaysia will not only become a high-income, sustainable and inclusive nation, but also a scientifically advanced nation by 2020. MOSTI will continue to work on the matter, and will support the National Transformation Programme (Dasar Transformasi Negara, DTN) and the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) in strengthening the country's STI agenda.

In line with the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (DSTIN), which is to develop, harness, and intensify talent in STI, MOSTI has looked into the implementation of a number of programmes aimed at the development of STI human resource capacity. By 2020, we hope to have 70 researchers for every 10,000 workers. Brain Gain and Brain Circulation in STI will be fortified. Our talent management system in the detection of demand and offering of skilled STI human capital will be boosted. The number of skilled and efficient workers to manage and maintain equipment and infrastructure will be bolstered.

Malaysia wishes to be a developed and inclusive nation by 2020. To make this happen, we need knowledgeable and ethical human capital to propel the growth of a sustainable and inclusive economy. Under the 11th Malaysia Plan, 1.5 million new jobs will be created by 2020, of which 60% is required to have



skills related to technical & vocational training (TVET) to drive the industrial sector. To achieve the target, student interest in TVET needs to be boosted as a platform upon which the number of skilled workers can be increased. To fulfil this, Malaysia needs to increase students' enrolment in TVET courses every year. This is done in stages, from 164,000 in 2013 to 225,000 in 2020. In the 2017 Budget, it has been announced that TVET education capacity will be enhanced, with an allocation of RM 4.6 billion to TVET institutions. Further, RM 270 million is allocated for the upgrading of related teaching-learning equipment in TVET institutions.

In relation to the increase in number of TVET students, it is important that student interest in STEM subjects be nurtured in the early stages. Since 1967, the Education Policy targeted the ratio of 60:40 for science stream: non-science stream students. However, until 2016, this target has not been achieved. Recognising its importance, the National Science Council (Majlis Sains Negara MSN) has appointed MOSTI, MOE and MOHE to develop the Pelan Tindakan STEM Kebangsaan. This Plan takes into account the instillation of STEM talent from the development, harnessing, and intensifying stages. It is hoped that with the Plan, the offering and demand for highly skilled workers to fulfil the needs of the industry and research institutions can be fulfilled. In the 2017 Budget, it was also announced that RM 570 million has been allocated to upgrade 1,800 science labs in primary and secondary schools in the country. I believe this is important so that our human capital development is by design rather than by chance.

Under the 10th Malaysia Plan, the government has identified the need to establish the Malaysia Board of Technologists (MBOT) to recognise graduates of skills and technology disciplines. This recognition will encourage institutions of higher learning, including TVET institutions, to offer technology-based courses, in line with the need of a high-income economy. This initiative is one of our strategies to elevate TVET through professional recognition, including the recognition of technologists, technicians, and skilled workers. MBOT will function as a professional body that registers and recognises Professional Technologists and Certified Technicians as professional careers. MBOT will also maintain the registration of Graduate Technologists and Qualified Technicians.

Apart from regulating the behavior and ethics of the professions, MBOT will also organise development and professional training programmes, as well as evaluating relevant technology and technical programs. The establishment of MBOT will increase the number of highly skilled workers through value-added TVET and skills training programmes that will be offered through accreditation councils in the related fields of technology, technical, and skills, that will be brought into existence soon. MBOT will also create an alternative route for TVET graduates to further their studies to higher levels, starting from skills certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, first degree, and higher degree. The experience garnered by a technologist or technician is valuable. This is where MBOT plays its role, which is to give recognition by means of the award of professional titles to technologists and technicians. This increases the quality and value of technology and technical services rendered, as well as securing recognition from the industry. Recognition of the Professional Technologist and Certified Technician

is to ensure that the quality of the technology and technical services rendered fulfil the standards stipulated by MBOT as a professional body that regulates the said professions. With the regulation of this professional service, the interest of the public as consumers of the services will be safe-guarded.

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The founding of MBOT would not have materialised without the assistance of many parties. MBOT is born from the teamwork of MOSTI, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Human Resources, the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Works. The four members of the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN), which comprises four public universities, namely Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Universiti Malaysia Pahang [UMP], Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UteM) and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) have also been instrumental in the effort. Polytechnics, community colleges, private institutions of higher learning including UniKL and many others, skills training centres (ILK), non-government organisations (NGOs), and the industry also participated in providing input and expertise in the founding of MBOT. Thank you to all involved in the successful establishment of MBOT.

I have been made to understand that the establishment of MBOT is much awaited by graduates of technology and technical disciplines. I am honoured to announce that on this historic day, your dream to acquire recognition as technologists and technicians will come true. As such, I urge all graduates of technology and technical disciplines to take the opportunity to register with MBOT and subsequently acquire the recognition of Professional Technologist and Certified Technician, who will contribute to the progress and prosperity of Malaysia as it leaps towards becoming a high-income nation.