

UMT NEWSLETTER

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Ocean of Discoveries for Global Sustainability



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Executive Editor

Professor Dr. Fauziah Abu Hasan

Editor

Wan Zulfitri Wan Kassim

Content Advisors

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Suhaili Safei
Wan Ab Hafiz Wan Ibrahim

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Photographers

Mohd Sharwan Abd Ghani
Mohd Shukry Tahar
Nur Hafiza Ellias
Tengku Iskandar Zulfahmi Tengku Mohamad

Corporate Communications Office
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
email : pro@umt.edu.my

International linkages, partnerships, and collaborations are important agendas for universities as they provide potential access to students, research funds, academic cooperations, and publications that will increase the global prominence of universities. Through mobility programmes, students are able to travel and learn from partner universities, academic staff are able to apply for international research grants and publish co-authored journal articles with international counterparts, and dual degree academic programmes provide many advantages to students undergoing the programmes.



Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) has continued to strengthen its international collaboration with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an international aquaculture company in Saudi Arabia, the National Aquaculture Group (NAQUA), to share expertise in the post-harvest technology and conduct joint training of staff and students in the field of aquaculture. This joint partnership will provide a good training ground for UMT's Bachelor of Science in Aquaculture students and provide graduates with opportunities to work at one of the biggest aquaculture farms in the world.

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International) was at Solent University, United Kingdom, in October to finalise the agreement on the dual degree programme between the two universities. The academic programme at UMT is the Bachelor of Management (Maritime) and the degree at Solent University is Bachelor of Science (Maritime Business), and these will be offered as a dual degree whereby students at both universities will finish their final year studies at the host university.

UMT will continue to pursue internationalization through partnerships with overseas universities and industries as the benefits and advantages of these collaborations are immense, and it is one of the key strategies of UMT to increase its visibility and prominence at the international level.

Professor Dr. Fauziah H. Abu Hasan
Executive Editor

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UMT Signs MOU with Renowned Aquaculture Company in Saudi Arabia

Dr.Ihwan Zakariah, AKUATROP & Wan Zulkifli Wan Kassim, PPAL



UMT has gained a new strategic partner from Saudi Arabia to collaborate with in the field of aquaculture.

The university recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Aquaculture Group (NAQUA), one of the renowned aquaculture companies in the Middle Eastern country.

Aquaculture is one of the fields UMT is heavily involved in through its Institute of Tropical Aquaculture and Fisheries (AKUATROP). The institute has been helping with the development of Malaysia's aquaculture and fisheries industry. The institute has also been involved in efforts to ensure the country's food security through research and special programmes.

NAQUA is one of the biggest aquaculture companies in the world. It has complete facilities and infrastructures including its own electricity source, comprehensive research laboratories, mechanization workshops, ice factory, processing factory, and packing factory for export purposes.

All the activities in the aquaculture process are carried out by the company, from the seed production to commercialisation.

The company has also established a community town complete with educational facilities, hospital, and shopping marts.

UMT delegates led by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Abdul Ghaffar were in Saudi Arabia to pay a special visit to NAQUA Chief Executive Officer Diego Illingworth and the other members of the top management and to attend the MOU signing ceremony.

"I believe UMT graduates and researchers will greatly benefit from the collaboration, as NAQUA has excellent postharvest technology," Prof. Mazlan said. "UMT graduates will increase their employability at the international level, and UMT researchers will be able to learn aquaculture approaches from the industry's perspectives."

"To produce holistic graduates, it is important for UMT to ensure that it develops and maintains the synergistic relationship with NAQUA," he said.

The collaboration is welcomed by NAQUA, as one of the main visions in Saudi Vision 2030 is to develop the aquaculture sector to improve food security.

Among the objectives of the collaboration are to work on improving the technology of alternative food production for aquatic animals and to enhance the application of the Internet of Things (IoT) to monitor and handle the management of aquaculture pools, such as water parameter control, food distribution, and disease control.

Some of the activities to be conducted include exchanges of staff and researchers between the two organizations and knowledge and expertise sharing sessions. The collaboration is also hoped to lead to hiring of UMT alumni.

To kickstart the partnership, AKUATROP has sent four technical staff to NAQUA to learn about commercial marine prawn farming.

"This collaboration serves as a proof of UMT's commitment towards establishing partnerships with other agencies and institutions for the benefit of all," Prof. Mazlan said.

UMT Strengthens Strategic Relationships with Universities in UK

Wan Ab Hafiz Wan Ibrahim & Wan Zulkifli Wan Kassim, PPAL



UMT has recently participated in the Malaysia-United Kingdom Higher Education Collaboration Enrichment Programme (MY-UK HECEP) 2022 that took place in London, United Kingdom.

The university's involvement in the annual event represented its continuous commitment to improving its internationalisation and strategic sharing with universities in the United Kingdom to enhance its excellence in teaching and learning, research and innovation, and student and staff mobility, said Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International) Professor Ts. Dr. Mohd Zamri Ibrahim.

In conjunction with UMT's participation in the programme, the university's delegates led by Professor Mohd Zamri also paid a special visit to Solent University, Southampton, to finalize the agreement on the offer of a dual-degree programme, which includes the Bachelor of Management (Maritime) degree from UMT and BSc (Hons) Maritime Business degree from Solent University.



The UMT and Solent University dual-degree programme will be offered beginning 2022/2023 academic session. Under this programme, students from both universities will be required to complete their final year of study at the host universities.

UMT delegates also conducted a benchmarking visit to Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at University of Strathclyde and University of Sterling. Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship is one of the centres of excellence that is renowned in Europe for its entrepreneurship research and teaching, innovation, and strategies in developing SMEs and involving them in entrepreneurial business ventures.

The centre that is funded by the university's alumni will become a model for UMT to adopt for its coming Entrepreneurship Centre of Excellence.

The programme that was held in September was co-organized by Education Malaysia London (EML) and Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS). Also participating in the programme were 11 public universities from Malaysia and 46 universities in the United Kingdom.

A Higher Aim for UMT in Antarctic Research

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yusof Shuaib Ibrahim & Dr. Wan Mohd Rauhan Wan Hussin



Sultan Mizan Antarctic Research Foundation (Yayasan Penyelidikan Antartika Sultan Mizan – YPASM) has chosen Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) to host the Chair of Antarctic Science. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed between YPASM and UMT on 18th October 2022 during the Opening Ceremony of the YPASM Polar Research Symposium at Le Meridien Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. With the agreement formalized, UMT will appoint a prominent international Antarctic researcher to lead various activities and help Malaysian scientists increase their involvement and impacts in Antarctic research.

During the ceremony, UMT also signed an MoA to jointly host the National Antarctic Research Centre (NARC) together with Universiti Malaya (UM). Having received the honour to lead NARC, UMT aims to be more influential in coordinating Malaysian researchers for Antarctic and Arctic research projects.

Both signings were witnessed by Terengganu Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Dr. Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar, who is also the Chairman of YPASM Board of Trustees. UMT Vice Chancellor Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan Abdul Ghaffar said he believed that the honours given will provide an easier path for UMT to strengthen the collaboration with Terengganu state government, especially in programmes to empower science and to conserve the environment.

Prof. Dato' Dr. Mazlan was also delighted to know that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yusof Shuaib Ibrahim was selected as one of the few recipients of the YPASM Research Grant, awarded during the YPASM 10th Anniversary Dinner held on the same day. With the grant amounting to RM 150,000, Dr. Yusof Shuaib as the Project Leader will carry out a study on Spatiotemporal Evaluation and Characterization of Microplastic And Associated Compounds in The Marine Environment of Antarctica And Sub-Antarctica Regions.

In studying microplastics, Dr. Yusof will collaborate with 7 other researchers, namely

- i. Assoc Prof. Dr. Tuan Nurul Sabiqah Tuan Anuar (UMT),
- ii. Assoc Prof. Dr. Alyza Azzura Abd Rahman Azmi (UMT),
- iii. Dr. Wan Mohd Afiq Wan Mohd Khalik (UMT),
- iv. Dr. Ku Mohd Kalkausar Ku Yusof (UMT),
- v. Assoc Prof. Dr. Siti Aqlima Ahmad (Universiti Putra Malaysia, UPM),
- vi. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Claudio Gomez Fuentes (Center for Research and Antarctic Environmental Monitoring (CIMAA), Chile), and
- vii. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azham Zulkharnain (Shibaura Institute of Technology, Japan)

Field measurement of the microplastics will be carried out from January to May every year (summer session in the southern hemisphere), and the collected data will be used to assess the possible impacts microplastics may impose on the ecosystem. This will be the first ever of such study by Malaysian researchers and the output from this project will increase the visibility of UMT among the World's top environmental researchers. Dr Yusof also hopes that this study will show Malaysia's commitment in addressing the plastic pollution issue and help the Malaysian government to comply with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal – SDG14: Life Below Water

Besides the Research Grant awards, YPASM also presented the Antarctic Medal awards to several outstanding Malaysian Polar researchers as a form of recognition. The Anniversary Dinner was successfully held at Hilton Kuala Lumpur, and the presence of Sultan of Terengganu, His Royal Highness Al-Wathiqu Billah Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, who is also the Patron of YPASM, has made the Anniversary Dinner a glorious ceremony.

UMT Achieves Greater Heights through Strategic Partnerships

Thirukanthan A/L Chandra Segaran, Institut Bioteknologi Marin



Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) is a world-class institution specializing in maritime studies and aquatic resources. It is well-positioned to take on research and development (R&D) programmes relating to its specialized area since it is located by a mangrove-lined beach fronting the South China Sea.

UMT has been collaborating with Ghent University and the prestigious Flemish Institute for Biotechnology (VIB). Young talents at UMT have benefitted significantly from this collaboration and in 2019 UMT-UGent Bioinformatics laboratory was first established. UMT has begun offering a Joint-PhD degree in Biotechnology with Ghent University, with 6 students expected to begin doctoral studies in this programme at the end of this year.

UMT has been granted a RM1.6 million Translational Research Fund to build an Artemia hatchery on its compound to promote knowledge transfer on Artemia culture techniques to the local community. UMT and Ghent University endeavour to promote the aquaculture industry in Malaysia, as well as make the project one of UMT's income creation projects. With the current available local experts and support from Emeritus Professor Dr Patrick Sorgeloos, a world-renowned Artemia expert (and also UMT's Sultan Mizan Professorial Chair) from Ghent University, Belgium, UMT will be the first in Malaysia to explore biomass and cysts production in tank systems.

UMT's partnership with the Ocean University of China (OUC) in the form of the UMT-OUC Joint Academic Centre in Marine Studies has yielded many excellent outcomes, whether in terms of scientific outputs, findings, or publications. In the past three years, UMT and OUC have worked on more than 15 high-impact articles concentrating on aquatic microbiology, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences, with some having an impact factor of more than 8.0.

When discussing Marine Biotechnology, the critical issues of conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development are consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs, and in particular SDG14, "Life Below Water." The Eleventh Malaysia Plan Strategic Thrust 4, as with other sectorial plans and strategies, such as the National Policy for Biological Diversity 2016-2025, augments this, with "Mitigating the impact of climate change on marine and coastal ecosystems" serving as one of the most essential thrusts. UMT is eager to collaborate with the National Institute of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIMB) in these aspects, also addressing on food biosecurity related issues.

UMT's Institute of Marine Biotechnology (IMB) is positioning itself to achieve the status of a Higher Institution Centre of Excellence (HiCoE), which is a Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education's initiative, in Climate Change by the year 2025, with the main goal of contributing to SDG-14 "Climate Action" as specified by the United Nations. In this context, efforts are underway to rebrand IMB as the Institute of Climate Adaptation and Marine Biotechnology (iCAMB), to be led by IMB's current director Prof. Dr. Yeong Yik Sung.

Strategic Collaboration Between UMT and Ain Aquaculture Sdn. Bhd. (AASB) to Boost The Aquaculture Industry

Norainy Mohd Husin, Azmie Ghazali AKUATROP



In driving the aquaculture industry to the next level, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and Ain Aquaculture Sdn. Bhd. (AASB) have officially become research collaborators. Both agencies signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on 18 October 2022. UMT was represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International) Prof. Ts. Dr. Mohd Zamri Ibrahim while AASB was represented by its CEO Dato' Wan Ariff Wan Hamzah. It was an honour for UMT to have Iranian Ambassador to Malaysia, His Excellency Ali Asghar Mohammadi, attend the ceremony and witness the MoA signing.

UMT and AASB has been working together since a long time ago on various projects. This time, UMT research team led by Norainy Mohd Husin has taken the initiative to establish an official research collaboration on oyster breeding research, which has led to this MoA signing. Via this MoA, UMT and AASB will collaborate in several aquaculture projects such as breeding technology and seed production of oyster, ornamental fish, and mud crab. In addition, staff and students from both agencies are also expected to get the benefits through the expertise and facility sharing activities, technology transfer, exchange and placement of industrial training

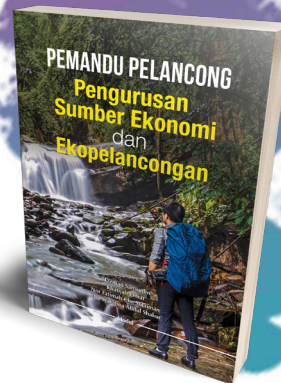
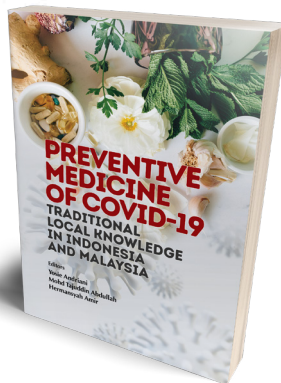
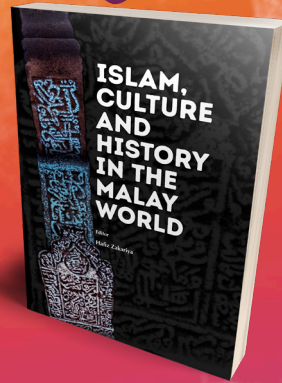
students, as well as co-organizing of future seminars, conferences, and symposiums. This MoA will also see the involvement of AASB and UMT in a future development project that will also involve the University of Tehran, Iran.

Prof. Mohd Zamri in his welcoming speech mentioned that the MoA is expected to enhance research, education, technical transfer, and other business expansion opportunities through the application of the latest research findings in aquaculture. "Although AKUATROP is considered relatively young, the country's first Higher Institution Centre of Excellence (HICoE) in Shellfish Aquaculture has made great contributions to the aquaculture industry in Malaysia," he said. "Hopefully this collaboration will benefit not only both parties but also the surrounding communities and stakeholders."

Dato' Wan Ariff emphasized that aquaculture is a promising industry that is capable of helping overcome the declining rate of fish landings in Malaysia and subsequently meeting the market demand. Also present during the signing ceremony were AKUATROP Director Prof. Dr. Mhd Ikhwanuddin Abdullah and AASB's Manager Mohamad Akib Baharom.



Highlights



Available at



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CONTACT PERSON

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