

# UiTM on making 4.0 the *Erasmus+ Programme*



**E**rasmus+ is the European Union's (EU) programme to support education, training, youth and sports in Europe. The aim of Erasmus+ is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, and promote the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training. Erasmus+ also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners in the field of higher education, and contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy. Specific issues addressed by the programme include: Reducing unemployment, especially among young people; Promoting adult learning, especially for new skills and skills required by the labour market; Encouraging young people to take part in European democracy; Supporting innovation, cooperation and reform; Reducing early school leaving; and Promoting cooperation and mobility with the EU's partner countries.

Its overall budget of €14.7 billion provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, and gain experience abroad. Set to last until 2020, Erasmus+ offers opportunities for students and a wide variety of individuals and organisations. In addition, € 1.68 billion is budgeted for funding actions with third countries (partner countries) through the EU's external action budget. This allows overall mobility opportunities of more than 4 million people in the world in various disciplines.

Malaysia is one of the partner countries to secure Erasmus+ research fund via 7 researchers at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The Institute of Research Management and Innovation (IRMI) UiTM hosted the 3rd Meeting on MAKING4.0 for Kuala Lumpur and Sabah on December 2-3, 2019. The main agenda of the meeting was to update the Work Packages and the deliverables. The agenda included revisiting the status of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), checking Guideline of funding (EU and Malaysian Treasurer) (including VAT, Monthly Timesheets and Open tender procedures), Equipment Acquisition Plan, Reviewing Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO) proposed by CETEM and Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA). Visits were made to LY Furniture Sdn Bhd in Muar, Wood Industry Skills Development Centre (WISDEC) in Kota Kinabalu, Politeknik Kota Kinabalu, World Trend Garden Furniture in Kota Kinabalu, and Sogoraya Sdn Bhd in Kota Kinabalu.

The research grant is funded by the Erasmus+ Programme – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices: Key Action 2 - Capacity building in the field of higher education (Erasmus+ KA2-CBHE). The Grant Agreement amount is EUR 947.450,00 and the allocation for the UiTM research group was EUR 101,991,00 a collaborative effort between the various higher learning institutions in Malaysia with their international partners such as Universidad Politécnica de Cartagena (UPCT), Spain, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (WULS), Poland, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT), Germany, and Asociación Empresarial Centro Tecnológico del Mueble y la Madera de la Región de Murcia, (CETEM), Spain. This group also collaborates with Malaysian partners namely Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB).

The UiTM research members are Assoc. Prof. Dr. Shahrman Zainal Abidin (Principal Investigator) and team members Prof. Dr. Azmi Ibrahim, Dr. Aruan Efendy Mohd Ghazali, Dr. Mohammad Azroll Ahmad, Dr. Shahril Anuar Bahari, and Mohd Shaleh Mujir. Their research is entitled Improving Malaysian HE Knowledge towards a Wood and Furniture Industry 4.0 – MAKING4.0.

In this particular research project, the team need to establish a European-Malaysian collaborative consortium with the objective of developing a Master's Degree programme for engineers of smart furniture factories. It will focus on the ICT skills needed to increase the competitiveness of the wood and furniture industry of Malaysia. Such research endeavours is proof of Malaysia's continued work in nurturing the research culture amongst young academics. It is hoped that this research excellence and collaborations will continue in order to enhance Malaysia's global scientific research commitments.

