Proposal for
SETTING-UP OF AN
INTERNATIONAL TOURISM UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA (ITUM)
IN PENANG

Proposed by:
TAYLOR’S EDUCATION GROUP
Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Prepared for:
Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER)
1st Floor, Kompleks Sime Darby,
Persiaran Kewajipan, USJ7
47600 Subang Jaya,
Malaysia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The rapid growth of international tourism in Asia and the Pacific over the last 20 years has generated not only income for the countries involved, but also enormous employment opportunities in the complementary service industries. The multiplier effect of this boom is obvious.

It is forecasted by the Manpower Development of the Economic Planning Unit of Malaysia that there will still be a shortage of skilled workers in the hospitality and tourism sector in Malaysia which has been recognized by the Government, and efforts are being made to supply, co-ordinate and upgrade on a continuing basis the provision of training facilities and capacity building to cater for this ever expanding industry.

In a general sense, it is essential to have unity of effort with both public and private sectors working together. This must be coupled with a conscious need to raise the level of skill and knowledge and improve the supply of manpower to satisfy present and future needs of the sector in Malaysia in particular and the region in general.

The present imbalances of demand and supply need to be addressed. Innovation, review, and upgrading of various systems need to be developed as with collaboration between the industry, the academia and the Government. The allocation of resources to meet these needs should be selective by order of priorities within the context of the National Development Plan of the nation.

In a wider context, there is already evidence that the multiplier effect of increased tourism on the economy has been considerable. Regional bias is also relevant to tourism development, as many hitherto undeveloped areas in Malaysia show great potential. Thus, the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) also has much to offer with its natural strengths and assets. If optimised and given the opportunity to flourish, the country’s overall competitiveness will be strengthened and prosperity will be better distributed.

Hence this upward spiral is completed by an increase in tourism development: the improvement and expansion of facilities: the development of the skill level of operatives in the industry: the multiplier in the economy, all pump-primed by positive, carefully planned, Government involvement.

Subsequent to this, PATA and Visa International’s Asia Pacific’s Asia Travel Intentions Survey 2007, released in April 2007, indicated that out of the people intending to travel in the next two years, 52% are considering Asia as their next travel destination. In 2003, during the inception of the Council on Restaurant, Hotel and Institutional Education (CHRIE) in Asia Pacific, then the President of International CHRIE, Professor Fred Mayo asserted that Asia had developed as the newly emerging global centre of excellence in hospitality and tourism industry including finest in education and the trend would continue in the many years to come. This phenomenon was referred to as the “Asian Waves”.

Thus, it is timely that Malaysia makes her mark by being part of this “Asian Waves” with the establishment of an internationally renowned Tourism University of Malaysia that allows for world class recognition as well as be the national hub for apprenticeship training that will feed competent workforce for the industry in Malaysia and the region.

With the “Asia Waves” engulfing tourism growth in Asia Pacific, armies of labour, workers, executive and managers are needed to support this seamless geometrical
growth. Thus, over the last few years we see the emergence of specialised universities and world class universities offering hospitality and tourism education, i.e. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, University of Nevada (UNLV) Singapore Campus, Cornell Nanyang Singapore, etc.

These established universities see the development of international links, especially the attracting of foreign students as an important part of their mission. Not only do overseas students provide useful additional income but these students generate wider benefits in terms of cultural, social, trade and political links. Asia has long been an important market from which universities in Western countries attract students.

Consequently, there is a need for Malaysia to attract these foreign students and retain its leadership position in hospitality and tourism education in view of rising competition in the region. A tourism university with a balance of both international and local students would certainly create a truly global learning environment just like the industry itself and further establish Malaysia as the Centre for Education Excellence in the region.

Increasingly too, there is growing recognition worldwide of the essential role tourism can play in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development especially in developing economies like Malaysia. The proposed Tourism University of Malaysia must be able to educate and train local population who can be gainfully employed via the University’s National Apprenticeship Centre (NAC). Thus, level of education attainment for youth can be increased. This will contribute towards better job prospects for youth.

The NAC’s Hotel Industry Apprenticeship Scheme (HIAS) will be designed to increase the market of skilled labour in the hospitality industry. This Centre will also harness the resources of the University to arrest the onset of social issues by piloting a nationwide programme whereby vocational training is extended to cover children under the age of 18 and award skill certificates that can further increase the employability of the local community. An “Adopt a School” programme under the Centre will identify a number of disadvantaged schools in the Northern Region which may be likely candidates for adoption by private sector companies.

With 21 years of experience, Taylor's School of Hospitality and Tourism (TCHT), a member of the Taylor's Education Group (TEG), is Southeast Asia's largest and most established hospitality and tourism management institution. The School offers industry-acclaimed certificates, diplomas, higher diplomas, bachelor's degrees and master's degree in collaboration with Academie de Toulouse, a division of the French Ministry of National Education for the diploma and higher diploma while the degree courses are awarded by the University of Toulouse (UOT), the second oldest and largest university in France. Over the last two decades, TCHT has produced 8,147 graduates employed by over 500 hospitality, food service and tourism companies across 35 countries. Declared a Regional Centre for Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Malaysia in 2002, TCHT's resort-style campus in Petaling Jaya is acclaimed by the industry to be the best.

In addition TCHT is also recognised as one of the leading contributor to capacity building for the hospitality and tourism industry in Malaysia. The Centre for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) at TCHT provide contemporary continuing professional education to working professionals in the hospitality and tourism industry.
Since its inception, CPE has trained over 1,700 industry professionals, business people, government officials and academicians from more than 350 different organisations all across Malaysia and Asia Pacific. CPE also coordinated the HIAS programme with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS) and the Human Resources Development Board, with rigorous programme that prepares students to step right into the hospitality industry. TCHT had the privilege of developing the HIAS training module which is currently being used today in Malaysia. To date, the School has successfully trained over 1,100 apprentices, with many of them successfully serving in supervisory and management levels.

There is no better way to immerse oneself in the tourism and hospitality industry than having a resort-like campus. Therefore, with a proven track record and sound financial standing, it is proposed that Taylor's Education Group (TEG) be considered to establish an International Tourism University of Malaysia (ITUM) with resort-like campus be built in Penang. The new campus in Penang will replicate TCHT's colossal achievement and initiatives to position itself as the premier hospitality and tourism institution in the region. The main approach of setting up this International Tourism University is to continue TCHT's long standing collaboration with the University of Toulouse, France (UOT) in a joint partnership to maintain the international flavour, in offering top-notch hospitality and tourism programmes.

It is proposed that the University will establish three (3) schools of higher education offering various bachelor degree programmes, and two (2) centres for excellence in apprenticeship and in continuing professional education. They include the School of Hospitality Management, School of Tourism Management, School of Culinary Arts, Centre for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) and the National Apprenticeship Centre (NAC).

The School of Hospitality Management will offer programmes in (i) Hotel Management, (ii) Hotel and Catering and Institutional Management, (iii) Leisure and Food Studies Management, (iv) Food Marketing Management, and (v) Event, Convention and Exhibition Management.


The School of Culinary Arts will offer programmes in (i) Professional Culinary Arts and Pastry Arts, (ii) Specialized Technology in Culinary Arts, and (iii) Specialised Technology in Pastry Arts.

CPE will focus on executive certificates and tailor made industry training in related hospitality and tourism management. For those who are not academically inclined, a vocational education track covering a younger age group will be coordinated by NAC which include programme like HIAS, Certificate in Hotel Operations, Malaysian Skill Certificate and other "Adopt a School" Programme.

In conclusion, in line with making Malaysia the Centre for Excellence in education in the region, the setting up of an International Tourism University of Malaysia with strong brand in hospitality and tourism education will strengthen the nation's capability to innovate, adapt and create indigenous capacity and skills thereby providing the foundation for an endogenously-driven growth. This in turn will position Malaysia as the front runner for hospitality and tourism capacity builder in Asia-Pacific and in the world.