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Leaders Gather in Kuching for the International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak 2026 (IDECS26) as Sarawak Advances AI, Semiconductors and Space



The ninth International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak 2026 (IDECS26) was officially launched at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, bringing together participants from more than 30 countries as Sarawak advances its capabilities across artificial intelligence, semiconductor innovation, deep technology and the emerging space economy.

KUCHING, 5 OCTOBER 2026 — The ninth International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak 2026 (IDECS26) was officially launched today at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, bringing together participants from more than 30 countries as Sarawak advances its capabilities across artificial intelligence, semiconductor innovation, deep technology and the emerging space economy.

The official opening ceremony was officiated by **The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, Premier of Sarawak**, and marked 12 strategic collaborations with a focus on translating technology, research and investment into new capabilities and economic opportunities for Sarawak.

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These included a Strategic Communication Instrument involving Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) and Converge Information and Communications Technology Solutions, Inc, ten memoranda of understanding (MOUs) involving Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd, Zecon Berhad, Neuronet Borneo Sdn. Bhd, and Agibot Innovation (Shanghai) Technology Co. Ltd. The ceremony also featured aerospace and defence-related collaboration involving the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF), the Airbus Defence And Space and Centre For Technology Excellence Sarawak (CENTEXS).

Jointly organised by the Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA) and Sarawak Information Systems (SAINS), IDECS26 is held under the theme “Scaling Innovation Ecosystems for a Borderless Economy: Earth, Orbit and Beyond.”

The ninth edition comes as Sarawak moves into the next phase of its digital economy development under the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030). Digital transformation is a key enabler of the State’s ambition to build a high-income and developed economy by 2030, supporting productivity, new industries, skilled employment and greater participation in the regional economy.

The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, Premier of Sarawak, said Sarawak’s focus is not simply on accessing technologies and opportunities developed elsewhere, but on building the capabilities to contribute to a wider regional and global economy.

“The question is no longer simply what technologies are emerging, but how do we build the capabilities and ecosystem that allow Sarawakian ideas, businesses and knowledge to grow here, connect outward, and scale beyond our borders. They represent the next stage of Sarawak’s efforts to use technology not only to improve how we work, but also to strengthen our economy and create new areas of value,” he said.

It is within this widening frontier that the State is targeting the launch of its first CubeSat-based nanosatellite by 2030, with the capability to collect its own earth imagery, geolocation data and other strategic information from low Earth orbit. The data could support areas ranging from development planning and environmental monitoring to resource management, while building local capabilities across semiconductors, satellite systems, engineering, artificial intelligence and data analytics.

The initiative is being developed as part of a wider space ecosystem. The State has established the Sarawak Aerospace Advisory Council to provide strategic direction for the sector, while the planned Sarawak Space Agency will coordinate development, strategic collaborations and local capability building. More recently, the State said work on the nanosatellite is being shaped through collaboration between the Sarawak Space Agency and i-CATS University College, including two laboratories for related research.

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This broader economic direction is reflected in the scope of IDECS26. The conference builds on established areas of focus in artificial intelligence, digital talent and future cities while introducing semiconductor innovation and the emerging space economy as two new priority areas. These discussions run across five conference tracks — The Future, Future Cities, Startup Village, SHE-TECH Asia Forum 2026 and the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Digital Research Conference, bringing together technology development, urban transformation, entrepreneurship, leadership and research commercialisation.

A key addition this year is the inaugural Centre of Excellence for Digital Research Conference 2026, which creates a dedicated platform to connect researchers and universities more directly with government and industry. The programme focuses on strengthening the pathway between research and real-world application. Researchers gain greater visibility into industry and public-sector needs, while businesses and policymakers are able to identify research and technologies with potential for further development, pilots, deployment and commercialisation.

IDECS26 also sees the return of **Startup Village** and **SHE-TECH Asia Forum 2026**, extending this focus into entrepreneurship, investment and women in leadership.

Startup Village builds on its IDECS25 programme, where seven startups received up to RM150,000 each in seed funding and business-development support, alongside four memoranda of understanding across digital agriculture, facility management, smart cities and AI-enabled biodiversity innovation.

SHE-TECH Asia Forum 2026, meanwhile, is held under the theme “**From Participation to Power**,” shifting the conversation beyond increasing women’s participation in technology towards their role in leadership, decision-making and shaping how emerging technologies are developed and applied.

The programme brings together global and regional experts including Dr Soichi Noguchi, former Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) astronaut, Professor Jason Pomeroy, Founding Principal of Pomeroy Studio and Fellow of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, Dr Catherine Ball, scientific futurist and author, Dr Nici Sweaney, Founder of AI Her Way and Ethical AI Strategist, and Professor De Kai, Professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Distinguished Research Scholar at ICSI Berkeley.

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The Right Honourable Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri (Dr) Abang Haji Abdul Rahman Zohari bin Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg, Premier of Sarawak, officiated IDECS26 at its opening ceremony.

Other State leaders participating in the official opening ceremony were **Yang Bahagia Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Morshidi Bin Abdul Ghani**, Chairman, Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), **The Honorable Sharon S. Garin**, Secretary of the Department of Energy (DOE) of the Philippines, **The Honourable Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Asfia Bin Awang Nassar**, Speaker of Sarawak State Legislative Assembly, **The Honourable Dato Sri Haji Julaihi Bin Haji Narawi**, Minister for Utility And Telecommunication and Minister in Charge of IDECS, **The Honourable Datuk Amar Professor Dr. Sim Kui Hian**, Deputy Premier of Sarawak, Minister for Public Health, Housing and Local Government, **Yang Bahagia Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Dr George Chan Hong Nam**, Chairman of Sarawak Information Systems, **The Honourable Datuk Amar Haji Mohamad Abu Bakar Bin Marzuki**, Sarawak State Secretary and Chairman of IDECS, and **Yang Bahagia Dato Sri Dr Haji Wan Lizozman Bin Wan Omar**, State Financial Secretary of Sarawak.

Looking ahead, the Premier of Sarawak announced that IDECS will mark its 10th anniversary in 2027, where Sarawak will also host the **World Innovation, Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA) Global AI Summit 2027** in Kuching. The event will bring together leaders from the global technology industry, government and the innovation ecosystem, building on Sarawak's partnership with WITSA through its Global AI Ecosystem Network and strengthening connections with international partners in technology, investment, research and policy.

The immediate priority is to turn the momentum from IDECS26 into tangible outcomes, from investment and deployment to stronger research-industry partnerships and wider commercial

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opportunities, while enabling more technologies developed and tested in Sarawak to scale into Malaysian and regional markets.

Appendix: International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak 2026 MoUs Exchange

Strategic Communication Instruments between:

1. Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) and Converge Information And Communications Technology Solutions, Inc

Memorandum Of Understandings (MoUs) between:

1. Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) and Huawei Technologies (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd
2. Zecon Berhad and Neuronet Borneo Sdn Bhd
3. Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) and Agibot Innovation (Shanghai) Technology Co, Ltd
4. Sarawak Information Systems (SAINS) Sdn Bhd and Ernst & Young Consulting Sdn Bhd
5. Immigration and Labour Management Unit (ILMU), Department of the Premier of Sarawak and the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Malaysia
6. Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) and Airbus Defence And Space
7. Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation Berhad (SDEC) and MYTEKSI Sdn Bhd (Grab)
8. SDEC Karuna JV Sdn Bhd (SKJV) and Imasa Dinasti Sdn Bhd
9. Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC) and Global Data Centre Sdn Bhd
10. Sarawak Artificial Intelligence Centre (SAIC) and IBM Malaysia Sdn Bhd

Handover And Acceptance Of Two (2) Sikorsky Nuri Helicopters S61A-4 Nuri M23-02 and M23-07 from:

1. Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) to the Centre For Technology Excellence Sarawak (CENTEXS)

About the International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak (IDECS)

First held in 2017, the International Digital Economy Conference Sarawak (IDECS) is Sarawak's international platform for bringing together government, industry, academia, investors and innovators around the development of the digital economy.

Jointly organised by the Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation (SDEC), Sarawak Multimedia Authority (SMA) and Sarawak Information Systems (SAINS), IDECS has provided a meeting point for exchanging global perspectives, building partnerships and connecting emerging technologies with opportunities for real-world growth.

The ninth edition, IDECS26, will take place from 5 to 6 October 2026 at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching under the theme "Scaling Innovation Ecosystems for a Borderless Economy: Earth, Orbit and Beyond".

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