



CREST-HRD CORP MOU TO HELP DEVELOP ROBUST TALENT PIPELINE FOR MALAYSIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR SECTOR

The Engineering Talent for Semiconductor Industry (ETSI) Programme targets to upskill 15,000 tertiary students, graduates, workers, and researchers to fuel innovation and enhance Malaysia's global competitiveness.

PETALING JAYA, 25 July 2025 – Collaborative Research in Engineering, Science & Technology (CREST) and Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp) signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 24 July 2025 to develop a robust talent pipeline for Malaysia's high-value Electrical & Electronics (E&E) industry, with a strong emphasis on the fast-growing semiconductor sector.

Anchored under Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) and Ministry of Human Resources (KESUMA), the collaboration represents more than just a milestone but a strategic catalyst driving Malaysia's ambition to become a leading global semiconductor hub.

The collaboration for the Engineering Talent for Semiconductor Industry (ETSI) programme was formalised through the MoU signed between CREST and HRD Corp, establishing a strategic talent development partnership under the National Semiconductor Strategy (NSS) framework.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Jaffri Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of CREST and Dr. Syed Alwi Mohamed Sultan, Chief Executive of HRD Corp.

The MoU exchange was witnessed by YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Prime Minister of Malaysia; YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry and YB Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources.

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This significant milestone took place in conjunction with the first anniversary of the NSS at the ASEAN Semiconductor Summit 2025.

ETSI, led by CREST, is a strategic initiative aimed at developing end-to-end talent for Malaysia's semiconductor ecosystem. It focuses on enhancing the capabilities of students, graduates, the current workforce and researchers in key semiconductor technologies – driving innovation and cultivating a highly skilled talent pool to reinforce Malaysia's position in the global semiconductor landscape.

It is aligned with the overarching objectives of the New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030) and more specifically, the NSS, which targets the development of industry-ready talent.

The NSS's goal of training 60,000 semiconductor engineers by 2030 will support sectoral growth, anchored by a future-ready workforce that advances innovation and drives R&D in Malaysia. This initiative will eventually support the ASEAN Framework for Integrated Semiconductor Supply Chain (AFISS), a Priority Economic Deliverable under Malaysia's Economic Pillar during its year as ASEAN Chair. One of AFISS's key objectives is to equip SMEs and workers with the tools, skills and financing to thrive in this high-value sector.

"In turning policy strategy into execution, MITI, together with KESUMA, are developing globally competitive engineers ready to lead in innovation, design and value creation. CREST-HRD Corp's programme to develop more engineers for the semiconductor industry is also about ensuring that Malaysia and ASEAN can capitalise on this critical sector, whose global value is estimated to reach USD2 trillion by 2030," said YB Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Utama Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz.

YB Steven Sim Chee Keong said that the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia (KESUMA) always believed that talent is the actual engine of economic transformation by supporting its initiatives.

"Through HRD Corp, KESUMA is pushing forward industry-driven, data-informed and outcome-oriented training models. The race for semiconductor leadership is no longer defined by how much capital we invest or how many factories we build, but it will be defined by the talent we nurture."

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“With HRD Corp’s claimable courses and employer-led training, we are helping the industry to upskill engineers without financial strain and companies in upskilling the next generation of talent through HRD Corp’s training schemes that enable employers to claim for interns and future workers, encouraging more businesses to take an active role in shaping Malaysia’s engineering talent pipeline,” said YB Steven Sim Chee Keong.

In support of this, the ETSI Programme also reflects a shared commitment that will accelerate talent development across the semiconductor value chain by leveraging HRD Corp’s levy ecosystem.

The Programme is a multi-pronged talent development strategy tailored to meet the evolving needs of Malaysia’s semiconductor ecosystem. It encompasses upskilling and reskilling the current workforce, enhancing graduate employability through industry-aligned curricula and early technical exposure, as well as strengthening R&D capacity and capability through postgraduate engagement.

These structured efforts are aimed at creating a holistic, robust and sustainable talent pipeline to build a resilient, future-ready workforce, laying the foundation for Malaysia’s long-term leadership and resilience in semiconductors, deep tech, and advanced manufacturing. ETSI also facilitates technology transfer and knowledge sharing via CREST’s Semiconductor Centre of Excellence (CoE), which offers advanced tools and infrastructure for training and innovation.

“Talent is the heartbeat of Malaysia’s semiconductor ambition. Through ETSI, we’re empowering students, engineers and researchers with future-critical skills and access to world-class infrastructure via our talent development programmes and Semiconductor CoE. Together with HRD Corp, we’re nurturing innovators from day one – changemakers who will shape Malaysia’s future by building companies and driving IP creation that will put the country on the global semiconductor map,” said Jaffri Ibrahim.

Dr. Syed Alwi Mohamed Sultan emphasised that today’s MoU signing and partnership is more than just a collaboration.

“At HRD Corp, we believe that every technological leap must be matched with a talent leap. That’s why we are committed to advancing the capabilities of Malaysia’s semiconductor industry – past, present and future, through strategic initiatives and a strong, ongoing partnership with CREST.”

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“We have a high ambition to support the NSS initiative in upskilling and reskilling 60,000 highly-skilled engineers by 2030, which definitely requires coordination, clarity and a commitment to actionable frameworks. With that, I am proud to announce that HRD Corp also has the Industrial Skills Framework (IndSF) specialised for the Semiconductor Industry - a comprehensive guide designed to help individuals, businesses and educational institutions navigate the skills landscape of the semiconductor sector,” he said.

ETSI exemplifies Malaysia’s whole-of-nation, unifying government, industry, academia and training institutions to build deep tech capabilities and secure the country’s long-term competitiveness in semiconductors.

As global demand for semiconductors intensifies, the CREST – HRD Corp collaboration positions Malaysia not only to meet the industry’s talent needs but also to create homegrown IP assets, while entrenching Malaysia’s regional leadership in the semiconductor industry and elevating the nation’s role in the global E&E value chain.

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About HRD Corp

Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp), formerly known as the Human Resources Development Council (MPSM), was established in 1993. It was later incorporated as Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad (PSMB) through the enactment of the Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad Act 2001.

As an agency under the Ministry of Human Resources (KESUMA), HRD Corp is responsible for collecting levies from key industries and disbursing training grants through its internal mechanism which is the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) or Kumpulan Wang Pembangunan Sumber Manusia (KWPSM).

The rebranding of HRD Corp in 2021 reflects the organisation's renewed responsibilities, direction and mission. This includes expanding upskilling and reskilling efforts by employers to help employees achieve more sustainable productivity.

This transformation not only benefits all Malaysians but also empowers underserved communities through more inclusive income-generating opportunities.

It is aligned with HRD Corp's long-term ambition to drive the nation's aspiration of developing a highly skilled workforce. For more information, visit the HRD Corp website at www.hrdcorp.gov.my.

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About CREST

Collaborative Research in Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST) is the catalyst and change agent that drives the growth of Malaysia's Electrical & Electronics (E&E) industry through market-driven research and talent development. CREST has been an agency under MITI since July 2023. While CREST is industry-led, its member representation is the triple helix of Government, Industry and Academia. CREST focuses on creating a vibrant Research, Development, Commercialisation and Industry (RDC&I) ecosystem by promoting collaboration between the Industry and Academia, with support from various Government organisations. To encourage the development of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized companies, especially those within the E&E space, CREST manages an incubator called "CREST Place", which enables the community to ideate, incubate, and innovate collaboratively. For more information, please visit www.crest.my

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