

Sabah Geo Hub – Driving the modernised SDI

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SUMMARY

The pandemic has caused a severe disruption to the world and forcing everyone to take digitalisation seriously. In Sabah, the government has embarked on its digitalisation roadmap started thirty years ago. When the pandemic hit in 2020, the digital world has emerged to be the next best channel to continue business because of the social distancing and good hygiene measures. Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19, the government has to ramp up the digitalisation plan as it's a matter of survival for the government, businesses, and individuals in Sabah.

Sabah Geo Hub is an initiative that is built upon the idea of a modernised Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) that allows information to be accessible anytime at anywhere by anyone using any devices. It adopts the "FAIR" (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) guiding principles introduced by the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) as well as refers to the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) that has been put together by the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

The initiative of Sabah Geo Hub was spearheaded by the State Secretary of Sabah in 2020 and the development of the initiative is undertaken by the Digital Government Division. The idea of a modernised SDI was mooted following the study on geospatial policies and future development was completed in 2020. In the past one and a half years, several essential capabilities and functionalities that go beyond data discovery, dissemination, and management have been added into the Sabah Geo Hub. At the present time, the Hub provides user with 1) a data portal containing a wide range of data harvested from different parties, 2) a personalised app store housing numerous designs of dashboards, 3) a sandbox environment offering different types of self-experiment tools, and 4) an interoperable SDI that is securely integrated with other data

hubs.

In the light of the most places including Sabah are moving towards reopening more and more economic sectors progressively, hence, Sabah Geo Hub will be continuously enhanced with more capabilities in the areas of process automation, 3D, artificial intelligence (AI), and possibly non-fungible token (NFT). Ultimately, the government of Sabah aims to create a functional digital marketplace by taking advantages of the concepts of geospatial, metaverse and NFT. Decentraland, for example, is a 3D virtual world platform that offers digital real estate potential. Users may buy virtual plots of land in the platform as NFTs.

Although the government of Sabah is not advocating for the similar digital real estate potential as aforementioned in Sabah, the promise of a future in which our physical world will merge with the digital in fully immersive virtual reality is true and tangible. Virtual world that is built using high quality data would lead to elimination of individual being mobilised on-site to carry out a measurement.

The implementation of Sabah Geo Hub is not a simple translation of paper-based information into digital form. It is a continuous journey with iterative steps from SDI to a modernised SDI and future potential of merging the physical and virtual world that brings about positive changes to the existing practices as well as new innovative approaches to address the prevailing challenges.