



3 DECEMBER 2022

RHB ISLAMIC THE FIRST BANK IN ASIA TO LEAD SCUBA DIVING TRAINING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS TO ADVANCE OCEAN LITERACY

PULAU LANGKAWI – RHB Banking Group (“RHB” or the “Group”), through its subsidiary, RHB Islamic Bank Berhad (“RHB Islamic”) further enhanced its sustainability efforts by empowering the special needs community through its collaboration with Diveheart Malaysia. The initiative is also in conjunction of the International Persons with Disability (“PWD”) Day. The ocean-themed activities under this collaboration is an extension of RHB Islamic’s flagship initiative, ‘Ocean Harmoni’ that champions United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (“UN SDG”) 14 “Life Below Water” and encapsulates the principles of Value-Based Intermediation (“VBI”).

Diveheart Malaysia (“Diveheart”), is part of Diveheart based in Chicago, United States of America (“USA”) and is a non-profit organization (“NGO”) that puts emphasis on helping disabled persons become Certified Divers through the Professional Association Diving Instructors (“PADI”) Adaptive Diving Techniques Speciality Training.

The inaugural two-day event to commemorate the collaboration between RHB Islamic and Diveheart was held in Pulau Langkawi on 3 and 4 December 2022, together with representatives from University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) Rehabilitation Medicine Department, Tourism Malaysia, Employees Provident Fund (“EPF”), Langkawi Development Authority (LADA), and various local NGOs in attendance. Special guests include two special needs divers, including Malaysia’s first double leg amputee lady scuba diver, who showcased their scuba diving capabilities with the RHB Adaptive Dive Support Team during the event.

“RHB is the first banking Group in Asia that has its own team of employees who are Qualified PADI Adaptive Techniques Support Divers. With safety in mind, it is a requirement that each special needs PWD diver be supported by three to four certified adaptive support divers during any dive session.

Through this collaboration, eight of RHB’s PADI Advanced Certified Divers that includes our senior management team members, have volunteered to be trained and certified by Diveheart as Adaptive Buddy support Divers. This underlines our additional commitment towards championing inclusivity in support of UN SDG 10 “Reduced Inequalities”, alongside amplifying our main thrust of UN SDG 14 “Life Below Water” where we continuously emphasize on ocean conservation and preservation.

In addition to this, we continue to reinforce financial literacy amongst the younger generation in Pulau Langkawi through a comprehensive ocean-themed Children Financial Literacy Workshop, which combines the importance of marine conservation and financial well-being. To-date, our ocean-themed financial literacy programmes have benefited close to 2,000 students. As a whole, these initiatives are in line with the Group’s Sustainability aspiration under our Group’s 5-Year (2022-2026) Sustainability Strategy and Roadmap to empower 2 million people across ASEAN by 2026,” said Mohd Rashid Mohamad, Group Managing Director / Group Chief Executive Officer of RHB Banking Group.

“Diveheart is delighted to collaborate with RHB Islamic as the first Bank in Asia to have a Diveheart Adaptive Buddy Team. Through this, RHB Divers are also able to assist Person with Disabilities for water therapy and to feel zero gravity underwater. This initiative truly reflects the joint-commitment in reinforcing our ongoing efforts to support and care for the society by fostering inclusivity amongst Malaysians,” said Syed Abdul Rahman Ahmad, Diveheart Ambassador Malaysia.

The event focused on both RHB’s and Diveheart’s continued emphasis on nurturing empathy and inclusiveness in Malaysians, highlighting the importance of including the special needs community in various initiatives including ocean-themed activities such as Water Therapy through Scuba Diving and marine conservation.

As part of RHB Banking Group's larger Sustainability initiative, RHB Islamic has actively promoted marine conservation and environmental sustainability since the inception of RHB Ocean Harmoni in 2019. The ocean-themed initiatives under Ocean Harmoni include issuing Asia Pacific's first eco-friendly recycled plastic debit cards in partnership with WWF-Malaysia. Up to 2022, RHB Ocean Harmoni has enabled collaborations to support turtle conservation research together with Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, as well as coral rehabilitation and rejuvenation research with Universiti Malaya. Meanwhile, the collaboration with Diveheart is aimed to further enhance RHB's sustainability journey by promoting inclusivity amongst Malaysians. Various upcoming ocean related programmes and more collaboration partners are also in the pipeline to further expand the RHB Ocean Harmoni ecosystem.
