

## NEWS RELEASE

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# RHB ISLAMIC INKS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH UMMC AND UMS TO PROMOTE OCEAN LITERACY

*Islamic Bank's Ocean Harmoni Initiative Champions UN SDG 14 'Life Below Water' to Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Sea and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development*

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**Kuala Lumpur** – RHB Islamic Bank Berhad (“RHB Islamic” or “Bank”) is expanding its sustainability initiatives under its Ocean Harmoni umbrella with two Memorandum of Understanding (“MOUs”), signed with Universiti Malaya Medical Centre (“UMMC”) and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (“UMS”) respectively.

The first MOU, RHB Islamic’s collaboration with UMMC, underlines the Bank’s commitment towards championing inclusivity in support of the United Nations’ Sustainability Development Goal (“UN SDG”) 10 ‘Reduced Inequalities’ while amplifying the main thrust of UN SDG 14 ‘Life Below Water’ which focuses on ocean conservation and preservation.

Meanwhile, its partnership with UMS emphasising research and development of sustainable aquaculture on hybrid ocean fish farming aims to move further its commitment to UN SDG 14 in the sustainable and responsible use of marine and ocean resources as over-exploitation and overfishing have far-reaching consequences on the nation’s economy. In addition, this partnership will promote knowledge transfer, environmental awareness, ocean literacy and preservation activities.

These partnerships are part of RHB Islamic's continuous efforts to educate the public about loving the oceans and activate the spirit of activism under the RHB Ocean Harmoni initiative, established in 2019, which promotes the conservation and responsible use of marine resources for sustainable development.

“RHB Islamic’s partnership with UMMC and UMS to advance marine-themed activities is an integral part of our broader flagship of the Ocean Harmoni initiative. While we had established collaborations in the past, I am pleased to welcome more like-minded partners on board our ocean conservation and public

engagement efforts. This reflects RHB Islamic's strong commitment to supporting UN SDG 14 'Life Below Water' and SDG 17 'Partnerships for the Goals' by raising public awareness in the conservation and environmental sustainability of the marine ecosystem," said Dato' Adissadikin Ali, Managing Director of RHB Islamic Bank Berhad.

"Besides marine conservation, we want to help local communities thrive, particularly those who rely on the ocean for their livelihood. In the case of our partnership with UMS, their aquaculture work on hybrid ocean fish farming ensures the longer-term prospects for the communities to earn their livelihood from the ocean while managing the acts of overfishing and exploitation," explained Dato' Adissadikin.

"Meanwhile, under the banner of our partnership with UMMC, we are taking the spirit of caring for society further to include people with disabilities ('PWD'). Scuba diving has shown to be a therapeutic experience for many PWDs, with several PWDs qualifying as certified PADI divers. We are delighted to support efforts to empower PWDs to live rich and fulfilling lives and join us in our journey under our Ocean Harmoni banner," he continued.

UMMC, through its collaboration with Diveheart Malaysia, actively promotes the benefits of scuba diving for the disabled community in Malaysia as a form of supportive therapy. Diveheart Malaysia is part of Diveheart, a Chicago-based non-profit organisation (NPO) that helps disabled persons become certified divers through the Professional Association Diving Instructors (PADI) adaptive diving techniques speciality training. Over the last five years, rehabilitation physicians at UMMC have witnessed the success of adaptive scuba diving activities in enriching the lives of PWDs and helping them improve their self-image and quality of life. Moving forward, Prof. Dr. Nazirah Hasnan, Director of UMMC, envisions establishing UMMC as a SCUBA Diving Hub for PWD with Diveheart.

Under the Ocean Harmoni initiative, RHB has enabled collaborations to support turtle conservation research with Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and coral rehabilitation and rejuvenation research with Universiti Malaya. The ocean-themed initiatives under RHB Islamic's Ocean Harmoni initiative include issuing Asia Pacific's first eco-friendly recycled plastic debit cards in partnership with WWF-Malaysia.

RHB Islamic will establish more ocean-related programmes and collaborations with like-minded partners to expand the RHB Ocean Harmoni ecosystem. To dive into RHB's Ocean Harmoni initiative, please visit <https://www.rhbgroup.com/ocean/index.html>.

