



PRESS RELEASE

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CHANGING THE MINDSET ON IBS

KUALA LUMPUR: Despite the numerous benefits that Industrialised Building Systems (IBS) brings to the construction industry and country, the rate of adoption for this modern method of construction could be much better, with only approximately 42% of public projects and an estimated 70% of private projects utilising IBS technology.

Additionally, the amount of IBS used in public projects falls below expectations, as only 24 per cent of public projects worth RM10 million or more have an IBS score of 70 or more, despite the IBS Roadmap 2011-2015 setting a target for 100 per cent of public projects to have an IBS score of 70 or more.

According to Ir Noraini Bahri, General Manager of the IBS & Mechanisation Division, Technology Development Sector of the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), of all the challenges facing the wide-scale implementation and usage of IBS in Malaysia, the biggest challenge and stumbling block remains changing industry's mindset towards this modern method of construction.

"Malaysian contractors are so used to the conventional way of building that they are unable or unwilling to make the transition to IBS, despite its numerous benefits. Our contractors are so used to conventional construction; they refuse to change. That is a difficulty that we have to overcome," says Noraini, whose division oversees the promotion and implementation of IBS in Malaysia.

CIDB's Technology Division has been active since the first IBS Roadmap (2003 – 2010) in promoting the technology to industry.

"We (CIDB) have been doing roadshows since before the first IBS Roadmap, in 2003. In the seven years of the first IBS Roadmap, we completed roadshow after roadshow to developers, to contractors, to local authorities, but still, there was no buy-in, as industry is so used to the conventional method of construction, the old kind of thinking. People are just reluctant to change and that's what's difficult for us."

Further key issues hindering the wider implementation are a limited enforcement of IBS requirements as per the IBS Roadmap 2011-2015; a lack of IBS expertise in the market;

the lure of cheap labour for construction in Malaysia; high import duties on machinery required to manufacture or install IBS components; cash flow problems for contractors; and minimal economies of scale for smaller developers.

Regarding the high duties on imported machinery, CIDB submitted a paper to the respective agencies to reduce the taxes and tariffs on needed machinery. On 9th September 2015, the Cabinet gave approval for the respective agencies to reduce the taxes and tariffs on needed machineries, allowing for a significant reduction on the costs incurred for the importation of these machineries.

“I could see the reason for these high taxes. Some of the machinery we use, for the construction sector are also used in the plantation sector. So, how will the government monitor that these will be used for construction only? They may be used in the plantations sector. CIDB is now discussing with the relevant agencies to finalise the standard operating procedures for execution of these tasks,” says Noraini.

However, Noraini sees hope in the next generation, especially students in universities.

“We are targeting the youngsters now, especially from universities. They have to know about IBS before they graduate, so when they graduate, they are more aware of it. We target the polytechnics, the universities, the technical universities, and especially the final year students,” she says.

“We also conduct training with professional bodies - Persatuan Akitek Malaysia and Institute of Engineers Malaysia, for instance. We appoint them as our training provider, so they train in the management of IBS projects, how to calculate the IBS score, and so on.”

Noraini says that the CIDB is there for contractors to help them on their IBS journey. “While it’s voluntary for contractors to start using IBS, they can come to us when they want to start using it in their projects. Our IBS Centre in Cheras is a one-stop centre for everything on IBS.”

“Those who start using IBS will never use conventional again. You can see that in the market - when they see the benefits of using IBS, they will never come back to using conventional. Never,” says Noraini confidently.

The Malaysian government defines IBS as a ‘technique characterised by the manufacture of prefabricated, modular construction components in a controlled environment, which is then transported to, assembled and installed onsite.’

The CIDB currently classifies IBS as to the following: (i) pre-cast concrete framing, panel & box systems; (ii) steel roof trusses and steel framing systems; (iii) timber framing systems; (iv) blockwork systems; (v) formwork system; and (vi) other innovative systems.

These IBS components are manufactured in a controlled factory element and to strict quality and measurement specifications.

The finished products are then transported to site, where the workers only need to install them, much like modular assembly of components.

Advantages of using IBS including cost savings due to reduced labour workforce, reduced construction time as components are fabricated ahead of the construction project, increased safety on site, improved quality as this can be controlled by the factory's quality control,

The potential of IBS was demonstrated to the world when a Chinese company built a 57-storey tower in just 19 days, a feat made possible by the fact that the components of the building were pre-fabricated and merely assembled on site.

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About CIDB

The Construction Industry Development Board was established under the Construction Industry Development Act (Act 520) to develop the Capacity and Capability of the Construction Industry Through Enhancement of Quality and Productivity by Placing Great Emphasis on Professionalism, Innovation and Knowledge in the Endeavour to Improve the Quality of Life.

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