

The Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology MOECRT Indonesia and NTU Singapore to set up joint research institute aimed at tackling sustainability challenges

[December 15, 2022](#)

in [Social & Behavioral Science](#)

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Jakarta, Indonesia, 15 December 2022 – The Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology (DGHERT) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MOECRT) of the Republic of Indonesia and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) are collaborating to set up a joint research institute with the aim of co-developing research and academic programmes and activities with a focus on climate change and sustainable development.



Credit: DGHERT MOECRT Indonesia

Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) to set up **INSPIRASI - Indonesia-NTU Singapore Institute of Research for Sustainability and Innovation** were inked on 14 December 2022 at the Sultan Hotel and Residence, Jakarta, by the Director General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of MOECRT Professor Nizam with NTU Senior Vice President (Research) Professor Lam Khin Yong and with the Director of Research of Indonesia Endowment Fund for Education (LPDP) Mr Wisnu Sardjono Soenarso.

Funded by LPDP, the agreement will last for five years in its first phase of implementation, and is expected to open doors for more collaborations in the future.

This first of its kind joint research institute is expected to become a hub for world-class research and research-based education (master and doctoral programmes) in Indonesia, as well as the catalyst for collaborations across all universities, research institutes, and industries within the two countries.

Indonesia's Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, made a remark on this important collaboration: "I am very pleased that Indonesia and Singapore share a strong commitment to collaborate in finding the best solutions to global challenges. The establishment of INSPIRASI (Indonesia-NTU Singapore Institute of Research for Sustainability and Innovation) will serve as an important milestone to our contribution towards innovation in Renewable Energy, Circular Economy, and Smart Cities. My highest appreciation goes to NTU for taking bold and concrete actions in embarking on this impactful partnership, and to all founding Indonesian universities for their strong commitment in making this joint research institute a success," said Minister Nadiem.

DGHERT has selected four Indonesian top universities to become the founding university partners along with NTU, namely Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universitas Indonesia (UI), Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), and Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS). The founding universities are committed to opening the activities within the research institute to all Indonesians, including Indonesia diaspora, that are keen to be involved with the institute.

The Director General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology of MOECRT, Professor Nizam, emphasised the importance of the collaboration theme for a sustainable future. "INSPIRASI, in Bahasa Indonesia, represents hope, in which we all hope this collaboration can inspire us all to ensure that we can work together to ensure our research is aligned with the world's collective effort for sustainable development goals. I hope we can work together doing research, exchanges, and sharing facilities between NTU, UGM, UI, ITS, and ITB as founding university partners and can be amplified to other universities as well," said Professor Nizam.

NTU Acting President and Provost Professor Ling San said: "The Indonesia-NTU Singapore Institute of Research for Sustainability and Innovation (INSPIRASI) marks a long-term partnership between NTU, the Indonesian government and Indonesian universities in collaborating on research and academic initiatives in sustainability. NTU's key strengths and multidisciplinary competencies in these areas will help nurture future-

ready talent and co-create knowledge with Indonesian partners, as well as address key research and development challenges for industries in the region. With a strong education component for both undergraduates and postgraduates, NTU looks forward to a deeper exchange with our Indonesian partners through INSPIRASI.”

INSPIRASI will focus on three research pillars that are deemed highly relevant in Indonesia: Renewable Energy, Circular Economy, and Smart Cities. The first phase of the collaboration will comprise two flagship projects: “Renewable Energy Living Lab” and “EcoCampus”.

Mr Wisnu Soenarso, Director of Research Facilitation of the Indonesian Education Endowment Fund (LPDP) also expressed his full support, in particular regarding the funding for research activities within the institute, to ensure that the institutions involved in INSPIRASI can stay true to its collective vision and mission. “We hope that in the next five years, this research institution will create significant impacts for both Indonesia and Singapore”, said Mr Wisnu.

NTU Senior Vice President (Research) Professor Lam Khin Yong said: “By facilitating collaborative research, innovation and exchanges between NTU and the top four leading research institutions in Indonesia, the Indonesia–NTU Singapore Institute of Research for Sustainability and Innovation (INSPIRASI) is poised to address key challenges in both countries and within the region. Beyond its role as an education hub to facilitate knowledge creation and transfer between NTU and the four Indonesian universities, INSPIRASI will be an innovation hub of cutting-edge technology, with a research focus on sustainability, particularly in renewable energy, circular economy and smart cities. In addition, INSPIRASI will seek to drive translational research with the potential of technology pull-through to industry, which could in turn attract collaborative opportunities.”

The collaboration is expected to start in the middle of 2023, beginning with the signing of the MOA yesterday, to be followed by a Master Research Collaboration Agreement (MRCA) to be developed by the founding universities.

Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed, Member of NTU Board of Trustees and Singapore's Non-Resident Ambassador to Kuwait who was also present at yesterday's signing ceremony, emphasised the people aspects of the collaboration in his remarks at the event. "We all know the importance of technology, digitalisation, and many great things that we will do in this institution. But this project should also be about relationships, about people. This is what INSPIRASI should be, it's literally 'inspiration' in English. We want not only to be inspired, but also to become inspiring," said Mr Zainul.

The setting up of INSPIRASI marks an important milestone for a long-term collaboration between Indonesia and Singapore in the field of research and education and demonstrates concrete steps taken by both countries to nurture the next generation of sustainability talents.

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