

# Aussie technology for research on renewable energy

by Norni Mahadi  
norni@sarawaktribune.com.my

MIRI – Sarawak will adopt Australian technology for research on renewable energy and communication technology projects in an effort to bridge the digital divide between urban and remote areas, said Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr George Chan after launching a Research Unit for Sustainable Energy and Communication (SECOM) at Curtin University of Technology Sarawak campus here, yesterday.

“However, the projects would be implemented according to local and geographical needs,” he said, adding that sustainable energy can come in any forms such as wind, sunlight and water.

“The research project conducted by Curtin University of Technology in collaboration with various institutions of higher learning in Malaysia is focused on the application and cost effectiveness of renewable energy systems and innovative information and communication to ensure that power supply is able to reach remote areas,” he said.

Dr Chan added that an in-depth research on target groups and types of suitable energy must be conducted first, eventhough the technique of sustainable energy has successfully been implemented in Australia.

“Private sector involvement in this research is very much needed to boost its development.

This is in line with the government’s aspiration to reduce the digital divide between the urban and rural people.

Furthermore, the government through the Ministry of Science and Technology is also looking at the possibility of transforming the programme to become profit-oriented to attract private participation.”

Curtin University of Technology

in Western Australia has been involved in research and development (R&D), education and training in both renewable energy systems and information and communication technologies for rural areas for more than 15 years.

Dr Chan said: “I believe the research unit will assist government agencies and the industry in the economic and social development of rural areas not only in Sarawak but for people in Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia too.”

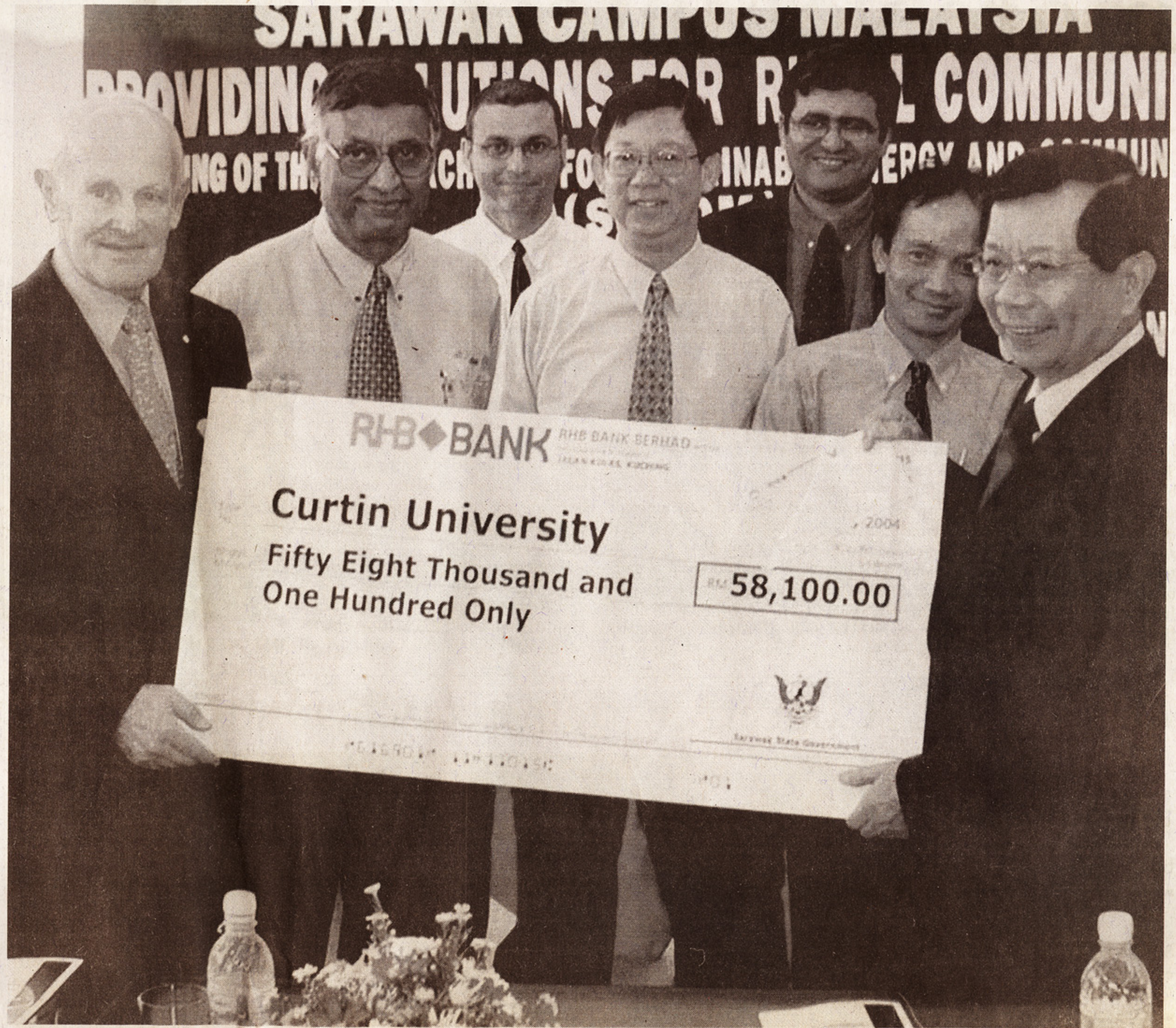
He explained that SECOM would initially undertake research focusing on the application and cost effectiveness of renewable energy systems and innovative information and communication technologies under varying local environments, both geographical and communal in urban and remote areas in the State.

Curtin, other local universities such as Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and the government would work together to solve existing problems in an innovative way.

At the function, Dr Chan presented a mock cheque for RM58,100 to the State Information, Technology and Resources Council (SITRC) to carry out a feasibility study on cost-effective rural Information Communication Technology network.

He was later given a briefing on the project by Sacofa Sdn Bhd managing director Ir Abang Jemat Abang Bujang, Professor Kah-Seng Chung and Professor Chem Nayar from Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering Curtin Perth and Vice Chancellor of Curtin University of Technology Professor Lance Twomey.

Also present were Senadin assemblyman cum chairman of the Management Board of Curtin University Sarawak Lee Khim Shin, Director of ICT Unit at the Chief Minister’s Department cum secretary of the State Information Technology and Resource Council William



TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE ENERGY DEVT ... Dr Chan (right) presenting a mock cheque to Twomey, witnessed by Prof Chem Nayar (2nd left) and Prof Kah-Seng Chung.