

MERDEKA 118 COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME

OVERVIEW

Application Opens	Application Closes	Applicants Notified By	Approved Applications Workshop
8 July 2025	10 August 2025	15 September 2025	1 week after notification

1. Rejuvenating Downtown Kuala Lumpur through Warisan KL

Warisan KL is a culture-based urban regeneration programme that strengthens Kuala Lumpur's identity through heritage, culture, and community. Focused on reactivating the city's historic core, it connects people to place in meaningful, inclusive ways.

Downtown Kuala Lumpur, the city's historical and cultural heart, is central to this transformation. With its rich heritage buildings and diverse urban character, the area is being reimaged as a vibrant, people-centred district.

To support this, Warisan KL adopts a precinct-based approach of 10 flagship project that include the Merdeka 118 precinct—identifying specific local needs and challenges. This enables more effective, multi-stakeholder collaboration and supports on-the-ground efforts that promote cultural expression, local enterprise, and civic pride.

2. Overview of the Merdeka 118 Precinct

Located in the heritage city centre of Kuala Lumpur, the Merdeka 118 Precinct celebrates national identity through iconic landmarks like Stadium Merdeka, Stadium Negara, and the world's second tallest tower Merdeka 118. Blending heritage, sports, and civic life, the area is being reimaged as a vibrant, inclusive hub. Efforts include activating heritage buildings, enhancing public spaces, and connecting with neighbouring communities such as Petaling Street, Kampung Attap, Bukit Bintang, and Pudu and Kampung Attap. With initiatives like the Merdeka Textile Museum, Look at 118, Masjid Al-Sultan Abdullah, Merdeka Boulevard at 118, 118 Mall, The View at 118 and many more, the precinct aims to become a cultural and sporting destination that strengthens social cohesion and economic opportunity.

Targeted placemaking strategies have been developed to meet the precinct's key needs—**enhancing connectivity, activating public spaces, fostering community engagement, and strengthening local identity through area storytelling**. Together, these efforts are essential to shaping a more resilient, inclusive, and vibrant Merdeka 118 Precinct.

The focus areas can be further broken down into several precincts:



Map 1.0: Light green indicates the focus area; the dotted circle marks the buffer zone boundary.

Focus Area 1: Merdeka 118 Precinct

Driven by PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn Berhad, the Merdeka 118 Precinct is a mixed-use development which includes 2 heritage stadiums, Stadium Merdeka and Stadium Negara. Other attractions are The View at 118 Observation deck, Park Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, a seven-storey retail mall called 118 Mall and three premium residential towers known as 'Merdeka Residences'. The Merdeka 118 development sits within a new 4-acre linear park known as 'Merdeka Boulevard at 118'.

Focus Area 2: Kampung Attap Enclave

The enclave is now renowned for thriving independent creative scene; consisting of fine arts, fashion and music.

Focus Area 3: Petaling Street Precinct

Already a well-connected tourist hotspot, the precinct still houses traditional trades and rejuvenated heritage buildings such as Rex KL, along with vibrant spaces like Kwai Chai, which continue to thrive amid rapid gentrification of the area.

Focus Area 4: Bukit Bintang Precinct

GMBB is a creative hub which provides accessible spaces to upcoming creative businesses, while Jalan Galloway has significant youth-centered enterprises.

Focus Area 5: Pudu Precinct

One of the earliest public housing schemes and schools in Downtown Kuala Lumpur, the communities are positioning themselves between mega projects surrounding their homes.

Buffer Area: Radius of 1,200m from Menara Merdeka 118

The buffer area can also be translated into 15-minute pedestrian catchment from the Merdeka 118 Tower.

Significant landmarks within the buffer area are Masjid Negara, Central Market and Dataran Merdeka.

3. What is the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme?

Since 2021, the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme has helped local communities in and around the Merdeka 118 Precinct recover, rebuild, and reimagine their neighbourhoods. By supporting ground-up projects, the programme continues to foster resilience, community pride, and sustainable growth.

Now in its third cycle, it strengthens the bond between the precinct and its surrounding areas through initiatives that spotlight local creativity, enterprise, and shared heritage.

Guided by a precinct-based approach and aligned with the Warisan KL aspiration, the programme reflects PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn. Berhad's ongoing commitment to nurturing a vibrant, inclusive urban district.

To date, the programme has supported 21 projects with approximately RM1million in funding, catalysing community action in precincts like Petaling Street, Kampung Attap, and Pudu.

4. What are the objectives of the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme?

The programme objectives are to:

- expand the portfolio of community products with potential for integration into the Merdeka 118 Precinct development;
- incubate sustainable, community-led content that enhance the vibrancy of the surrounding areas;
- sustain collaboration and partnerships with communities surrounding the Merdeka 118 Precinct; and

- celebrate the history of the surrounding area of the Merdeka 118 Precinct.

5. Who can apply for the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme?

The grants programme welcome **individuals, collectives, community-based organisations, businesses and non-government organisations*** with the project ideas that can contribute to the rejuvenation of the Merdeka 118 Precinct and its surrounding areas.

The lead applicant must assume full administrative responsibility and actively participate in the entire process.

As the programme prioritises bottom-up initiatives, government agencies and departments are not eligible but may explore collaborations beyond the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme.

**Organisations registered under Registrar of Companies, Registrar of Societies and/or Registrar of Businesses are welcome to apply.*

6. What does the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme support?

The grants programme provides funding for direct expenses related to proposed project, with grants amounts ranging from RM20,000.00 to RM150,000.00 per application. It is important to note that the programme:

- prioritises projects that have a 1:1 co-investment;
- prioritises projects with high impact potential;
- supports projects that are inclusive to all communities, attract new users to the space, introduces new high-quality content, or diversifies the usage of spaces; and
- prioritises projects that can be completed by 30 March 2026*.

**Any request of extension beyond this deadline must be submitted in writing to Think City by 28 February 2026 for review.*

7. How can your project help bring the Merdeka 118 Precinct vision to life?

The grants programme supports projects associated to three themes:

7.1 CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

Supporting efforts to preserve tangible and intangible heritage in the Merdeka 118 surrounding vicinities to maintain place identity in navigating urban rejuvenation.

- **Safeguarding Cultural Identity** – Support initiatives that preserve, celebrate, and pass down knowledge and storytelling to strengthen the unique place-based identity. These efforts honour local traditions, foster community pride, and ensure that the area’s rich cultural fabric continues to thrive for generations to come.
- **Revitalising Intangible heritage** – Breathing new life into place-based storytelling by blending heritage with innovation, empowering communities to share cultural traditions using technology that engages and inspires today’s audiences.

7.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Providing access to capacity building support for vulnerable sections of the communities in social, education and economic matters.

- **Social** – Support programmes and initiatives that strengthen social cohesion, promote inclusion, and build local capacity, particularly among underprivileged communities surrounding the Merdeka 118 Precinct.
- **Education** – Support learning initiatives, knowledge-sharing platforms, and skills development programmes that improve access to education and foster lifelong learning within communities surrounding the Merdeka 118 Precinct.
- **Sustainable Economy** – Support community-driven initiatives that enhance local livelihoods by building entrepreneurial skills and supporting the growth of micro or informal economies, all within the context of the areas surrounding the Merdeka 118 Precinct. This approach should aim to create sustainable economic growth rooted in the unique cultural, social, and economic landscape of the local communities.

7.3 COMMUNITY CONTENT AND/OR ACTIVATION

Empowering local artisans and cultural champions in Downtown Kuala Lumpur to create high-quality content, incubate talent, and foster healthy, community-driven lifestyles as a response to the area’s social challenges.

- **Community content** – Support the creation of locally-rooted content—such as publications, toolkits, creative works, or products—developed by community groups, resident associations, or collectives. These initiatives capture and celebrate lived experiences, amplify diverse voices, and reinforce a strong sense of local identity connected to the Merdeka 118 Precinct.



- **Community activation** – Support initiatives, community events, and participatory activities that unite people, foster a strong sense of belonging, and enliven shared spaces within communities around the Merdeka 118 Precinct.

Table 7.1 shows the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme Cycle 3 themes

8. What are the requirements to apply for the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme

Interested applicants are required to attend open day or outreach sessions hosted by Think City or its partners to fully understand the programme's criteria, objectives, and proposal preparation process. Detailed application requirements for each Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme theme are outlined below:

8.1 CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION	
Safeguarding cultural identity	To qualify, projects must: • Be located within the grants programme focus area and significant in terms of local culture and/or heritage • Include plans to engage or secure a conservator for buildings with heritage features. • Host businesses or activations that align with the vision of the Merdeka 118 Precinct. • Submit a detailed implementation plan along with financial projections. • Provide proof of ownership, lease agreement, plans or proof of community engagement/ buy-in, or a letter of interest from the property owner for the project site.
Revitalising intangible heritage	
8.2 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT	
Social	To qualify, projects must: • Submit a comprehensive implementation plan, including marketing and detailed strategy. • Provide a list of project partners. • For business expansion projects, include a 3-year business projection plan. • Provide a letter of interest and proof of engagement with the targeted beneficiaries.
Education	
Sustainable economy	
8.3 COMMUNITY CONTENT AND/OR ACTIVATION	
Community content	To qualify, projects must: • Submit a project implementation plan, including marketing and outreach strategies. • Provide a list of project partners. • For research and publication projects, include a draft manuscript, proposed abstract, and methodology where applicable. • Provide proof of ownership, lease agreement, plans or proof of community engagement/ buy-in, or a letter of interest from the property owner for the project site.
Community activation	

Table 8.1 shows eligibility criteria by grant theme

9. What types of expenses does the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme support?

Below are examples of eligible expenses supported under the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme:

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES	
Project mobilisation and preliminary works	- Studies, technical assistance, assessment, and other advisory services required prior to project implementation; and - Site mobilisation, clearance, and cleaning.
Materials and supplies	Costs associated with raw or produced materials required for artwork, installation, production, construction, greening and publication.
Equipment and technology	Costs may include rental of machinery, equipment, software, or other necessary technology for manufacturing, printing, distribution, and event technical setup.
Professional services	- Associated costs required for project implementation which may include fees for hiring specialists, facilitators, collaborators, curators, project leads, consultants, contractors, service providers or other professional or advisory services required for specific project tasks; - Costs associated with capacity building activities aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the project team or the wider community.
Marketing and promotional activities	- Expenses for promoting and disseminating project information, such as social media/digital ads, marketing collaterals, catalogue printing, and website development; and - Inclusive of engagement of creative personnel such as designer, copywriter, photographer, and videographer.

Remarks: The examples listed above may not be exhaustive. Please contact Think City for further clarification regarding eligible expenses.

10. What types of expenses are not supported by the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme?

The following expenses are not eligible for funding:

- Costs incurred prior to the signing of the grant agreement;
- Company registration fees or licensing costs;
- Accommodation expenses;
- Routine repair and ongoing maintenance beyond the initial implementation period;
- Purchase or acquisition of physical assets;
- Existing organisational overheads (e.g. rent, insurance, utility bills, staff salaries, council tax);
- Fines, penalties, or legal fees;
- Sales and Services Tax (SST).

11. Who is not eligible for the application of Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme?

Your application will not be supported if:

You are an individual/collective/organisation:

- Has been declared bankrupt or is undergoing bankruptcy proceedings;
- Is currently involved in legal actions, claims, processes, or investigations;
- Is facing criminal process or is named as an accused in an ongoing court case process;
- Has pending outstanding evaluation reports from previous Think City funded programmes; and
- Has adverse findings identified during the due diligence process.

You are proposing a project that:

- Commenced prior to the date of grant notification;
- Lacks strong community engagement components;
- Does not clearly define the project background or objectives;
- Fails to comply with applicable laws and ordinances;
- Contains content that denigrate or debase individuals or groups based on race and religion, or that may incite conflict or misunderstanding in our diverse society;
- Poses a threat to national security or public stability; and
- Is not intended for wider public consumption.

12. What documents should be submitted with your application?

Project Proposal

Applications must include a detailed proposal that clearly identifies the project's intention, process, and any technical requirements (if applicable). As a guideline, proposed projects should demonstrate the following core values:

- Respectful – Reflect and respect local culture, history, diversity of Malaysia, as well as the place identity of Merdeka 118 Precinct and its surrounding, and comply with all applicable laws and ordinances;
- Inclusive – Be engaging and accessible to people of all backgrounds regardless of age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability or gender;
- Innovative – Introduce new methods or ideas to drive progress, create competitive advantage, and distinguish the project within the market;
- Entrepreneurial – Demonstrate diverse skill sets to support business or brand growth.

Required Documents

Applications must also submit the following documents (if applicable in PDF format):

- Applicant's CV/profile/portfolio (for individuals/organisations)
- Project team and roles (including key partners overseeing or advising throughout the project)
- Budget breakdown (Detailing all costs, including any third-party costing. A summary of these details must also be provided in the grants portal application))
- Blanked-out bank statement showing proof of mailing address
- Company/organisation details – Certificate of Registration with Registrar of Companies/Societies/Business – Forms 9, 13, 24, 44, 49, M&A
- Other supporting documents such as:
 - Current pictures of the project site
 - Third-party costings
 - Research documents, etc.
- Other relevant documents listed in Table 8.1.

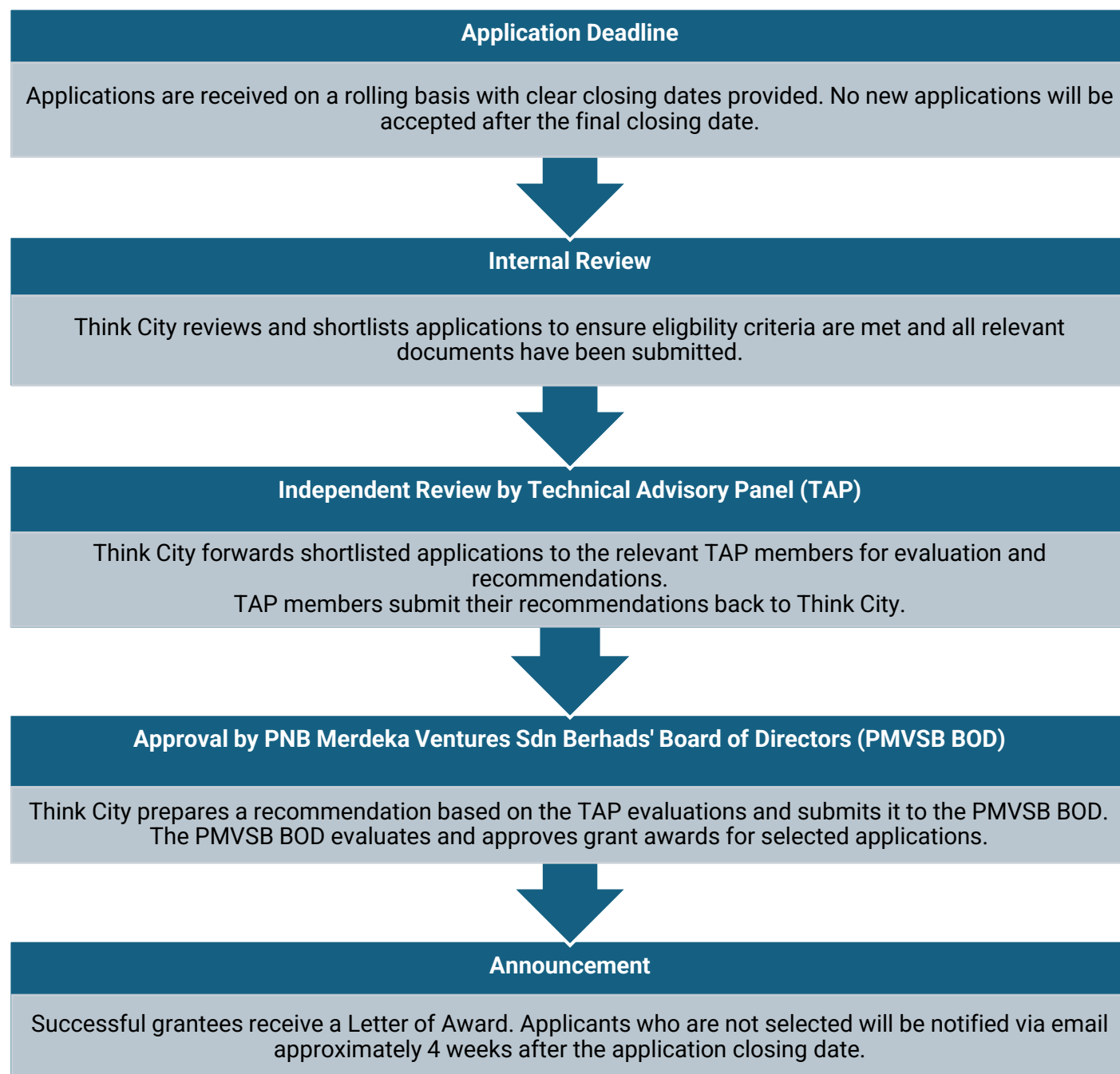
13. How can you apply for the Merdeka 118 Community Grants Programme?

Interested applicants must submit their application and all required documents via the grants platform at <https://thinkcity.grantplatform.com>.

Please note attendance at an Open Day or outreach session is a mandatory part of the application process. Dates for these sessions will be announced on the Merdeka 118, Warisan KL and Think City website, and communicated through all relevant Merdeka 118, Warisan KL, and Think City platforms.

14. What happens after you apply?

All applications are jointly assessed and approved through a highly competitive evaluation process. The process shall be as follows, subject to change or modification at any time, at the sole discretion of Think City:



15. What happens after the applications are assessed?

a. Successful Applications

- i. Successful applicants will receive an official email notification along with the Letter of Offer (LOO).
- ii. The LOO will be valid for seven (7) days from the time the notification email is sent. If the applicant does not accept the offer within this period, the offer will lapse.
- iii. As a successful grantee, you are required to attend an Approved Application Workshop with Think City to confirm the terms and conditions of the grants.
- iv. Once the milestone deliverables are agreed upon by both the grantee and Think City, you will receive a Letter of Award (LOA) detailing:
 - approved grant amount and purpose;
 - terms and conditions of the project; and
 - scope of works and list of milestone deliverables.

b. Unsuccessful Applications

Unsuccessful applicants will receive an email notification if the application is not shortlisted within the same notification period.

c. Appeals

Think City does not accept appeals. All decisions are final.

16. How will you receive funding?

Funding will be disbursed upon completion of agreed milestones and deliverables. The funding will be made within 30 days of the approved submission and approval of the milestone report and will be transferred to the recognised bank account of the grantee (individual or organisation).

The percentage of funding and specific deliverables for each milestone may be refined on a case-by-case basis and are subject to final approval. The process flow is outlined below:





The cited reports provide Think City with valuable data and outcome metrics to monitor the performance and progress of each project, ensuring accountability for programme funds. They also support and inform Think City's research and communications, allowing us to demonstrate the impact of our funded applicants.

17. What are the expectations for deliverables and reporting requirements form successful applicants?

a. Throughout the grant period, you will be required to:

- i. Deliver the proposed project within the grant period as outlined in the Letter of Award (LOA) and adhere to agreed reporting requirements;
- ii. Maintain regular communication with Think City to provide updates on project progress, or notify us of any changes to the scope of work or timeline; and
- iii. Acknowledge the support of PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn. Berhad, Think City, and Warisan KL through relevant media platforms and comply to Merdeka 118 and Think City's brand guidelines i.e., to include logos on all publicity and marketing collaterals related to the supported projects.

b. Milestone Reports must be submitted at the end of each agreed milestone and a Project Closure Report is also required at the end of the project, along with the following:

- i. An Outcome Assessment Survey that is to be submitted within fourteen (14) days upon completion of the project (template provided by Think City);
- ii. A finance statement outlining the actual budget utilisation (template provided by Think City); and
- iii. Any supplementary materials such as photography, videography and/or collaterals created during the project.



c. Additional Notes:

- i. Think City reserves the right to revoke any application or approval under the following circumstances:
 - Changes to the scope of the project without prior notification to and approval from Think City;
 - Failure to complete the project as per the submitted proposal (without valid justification); and
 - Breach of terms and conditions specified and agreed in the Letter of Award (LOA).

18. Who can you contact if you have any questions?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your applications in detail, please contact Think City via WhatsApp message at +6010 201 8930 or email downtownkl@thinkcity.com.my with your enquiries, or to request an appointment.

About PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn. Berhad

PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn. Berhad was incorporated in June 2000 and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Permodalan Nasional Berhad (PNB). PNBMV is the landowner and sole custodian of both Stadium Merdeka and Stadium Negara. Both stadiums have been listed as “National Heritage” sites in October 2005 under the National Heritage Act 2005. Thereafter PNB Merdeka Ventures carried out meticulous conservation efforts, earning Stadium Merdeka the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Culture Heritage Conservation Programme (Asia Pacific) in 2008.

The Merdeka 118 Precinct is a mixed-use development comprising premium Grade A office spaces, The View at 118 Observation deck, Park Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, a seven-storey retail mall called 118 Mall and three premium residential towers known as ‘Merdeka Residences’. The Merdeka 118 development sits within a new 4-acre linear park known as ‘Merdeka Boulevard at 118’.

The Merdeka 118 tower was recognised as the second tallest building in the world by the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat (CTBUH) in October 2023. Subsequently, the tower was officially inaugurated on 10th January 2024 by Sultan Abdullah Ri’ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah.

About Think City

Think City is an urban impact organisation established in 2009 to create more sustainable and equitable places for the benefit of all. Our knowledge, skills and strategies focus on urban solutions, the environment, social communities, and the cultural economy. Think City is a wholly owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad (the sovereign wealth fund of the Government of Malaysia). For more information, log on to thinkcity.com.my.