

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

PENANG BAY INTERNATIONAL IDEAS COMPETITION: GLOBAL CALL FOR ENTRIES TO REIMAGINE MALAYSIAN WATERFRONTS

ABU DHABI, Feb 11, 2020 – The Penang State Government of Malaysia launched today the Penang Bay Ideas Competition at UN Habitat’s 10th World Urban Forum. The competition seeks creative ideas from architecture and planning professionals worldwide for the integrated redevelopment of the George Town and Butterworth waterfronts in the state of Penang, Malaysia.

George Town, situated on Penang island is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is famed for its heritage, culture, and tourism while Butterworth, on Penang’s mainland, has a concentration of industry, and is the site of Penang’s port and transport hub. The two waterfronts are separated by a channel, roughly 2.7 kilometres apart. Together, the redeveloped waterfronts have the potential to transform the Penang state into a hub of innovation, revolutionising the economy significantly.

The competition aims to seek attractive ideas for these waterfronts from potential partners and investors while promoting global, regional, and national debate regarding the future of Penang. The broad scope of the programme includes cultural facilities, mixed-use, residential and commercial areas, recreational spaces, and an oceanview promenade for both waterfronts.

Penang State Executive Councillor for Housing, Local Government, and Urban & Country Planning, Jagdeep Singh Deo, officiated the launch of the competition at the 10th World Urban Forum. Speaking at the launch, he stated that Penang Bay would be pivotal to the state’s Penang2030 vision of “a family-focused, green and smart state that inspires the nation”.

“The two waterfronts should complement each other. George Town can leverage its existing assets to develop a hub where culture, creativity and technology intersect, while Butterworth has the potential to become a high-skilled regional innovation hub, servicing industries of the future,” he said.

Hamdan Abdul Majeed, Managing Director of Think City and Director of the George Town Conservation & Development Corporation (GT CDC) believes that Penang Bay will be a game changer with the potential to propel Penang towards becoming a high-income state.

“Waterfront developments have a proven ability to redefine the character of a city, similar to Hong Kong-Kowloon and the San Francisco Bay Area. Just as the Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zone propelled Penang into the high-tech manufacturing space in the 1970s and 80s, Penang Bay has the potential to transform the economy and create a new city core that is connected and optimised ,” Hamdan added.

The project has already garnered significant interest at WUF10, being shortlisted as a finalist from over 100 projects globally for the WUF10 Cities Investment Platform pitching session, where the Penang Bay project was introduced to a distinguished global investor panel that included leading financing organisations and urban technology players.

The minister and Hamdan also announced the establishment of the Think City Institute at the launch of the ideas competition. The Think City Institute, which builds on the organisation's decade of knowhow, experimentation and knowledge networks, will involve a combination of accredited coursework, research fellowships and publications.

The Penang Bay Ideas Competition is led by the George Town Conservation & Development Corporation (GT CDC), a tripartite partnership between the Penang government's Chief Minister Incorporated (CMI), Think City Sdn. Bhd. And the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Think City, a social purpose organisation and urban "think-and-do-tank" based in Malaysia is organising the competition, on behalf of the GT CDC.

Open to architects, landscape architects, and urban planners from all over the world, either as individuals, teams, or firms, the competition will be judged by a six-member jury of architectural professionals, chaired by the Penang chief minister, who will select the top three winners and three honourable mentions. The award for first place will win US \$20,000, followed by US \$8,000 and US \$4,000 respectively.

Further details of the Penang Bay Ideas Competition will be available at:
www.penangbaycompetition.com.

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About Think City

Think City is a social purpose organisation dedicated to making cities people-friendly and resilient by being a catalyst for change in the way cities are planned, curated, developed and celebrated. As a regional citymaking agency, Think City provides urban policy thinking, management and implementation of urban solutions in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Established in 2009 to spearhead urban regeneration in George Town, their impact and successes have led to expansion into Butterworth, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Bahru. Adopting a community-first, evidence-based approach, Think City focuses on four main communities of practice: Placemaking, Resilience, Analytics and Conservation.

Owing to their position as a neutral party, Think City has enabled synergies between the public and private sectors, the community and international partners. Together, they work to implement projects that enhance the arts, heritage, culture, environment, economy and resilience of cities in the Asean region. Think City is celebrating their 10th Anniversary with a year-long programme of events and projects. For more, see thinkcity.com.my.

About George Town Conservation & Development Corporation

The George Town Conservation and Development Corporation Sdn. Bhd. (GTCDC) is a partnership between the Penang State Government's Chief Minister Incorporated (CMI) and Think City Sdn Bhd with technical services supported by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. It is a Project Implementation Vehicle set up to improve the public realm following the George Town Special Area Plan. These include the Waterfront Precinct, the Clan Jetties and the Street of Harmony neighbourhoods. Among its key objectives are the regeneration, upgrading and activation of public spaces and selected heritage buildings in the UNESCO World Heritage Site including Fort Cornwallis and Syed Al-Attas Mansion.

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