

Universal Robots eyes Malaysia's Industry 4.0 Potential

17 May 2019 | News | By Hithaishi CB

Universal Robots (UR) robotic automation is to transform Malaysia's manufacturing sector by promoting higher adoption of Industry 4.0 related technologies



Universal Robots (UR), Denmark-based 'collaborative robots' (cobots) market leader has identified Malaysia as a key growth market in line with the country's increased focus on automation and robotics, as outlined in its National Policy on Industry 4.0 (Industry4WRD), to transform its manufacturing sector.

The manufacturing sector, comprising 98.5% of Malaysian SMEs, serves as a major contributor to the country's economy. In 2018, the sector contributed 22.4% of GDP, roughly RM 325 billion.

Lightweight, compact and flexible cobots can work in small spaces and across various industries. With in-built safety features, these robots make it safe for people to work in close proximity without having to install safety barriers (subject to risk assessment). Cobots' endless benefits offer huge advantages for industries in Malaysia, enhancing productivity, quality and workers' well-being.

Cobots - robots designed to work safely alongside people - are the fastest growing segment of industrial automation, expected to rise ten-fold to 34% of all industrial robot sales by 2025, according to the International Federation of Robotics (IFR).

Since its entry into the Malaysian market in 2013, UR has actively expanded its distribution base. Its cobots are distributed by Bizit Systems, EPCO Precision, Multitrade Asia Pac, Servo Dynamics, T.E.M. Engineering and TMS Collaboration Automation.

Sakari Kuikka, General Manager, Southeast Asia and Oceania at UR said: "Malaysia deployed just 45 units of industrial robots per 10,000 employees in 2017, almost 50% below the global average of 85 units. In a 2017 FMM-MIER survey, only 7.4% of Malaysian respondents used autonomous robots – 23.3% of which were SMEs. We see huge potential to boost the adoption of robotic automation as the country focuses on strengthening its manufacturing sector and gearing towards becoming a developed nation."

He added: "Malaysia ranks high in the region in terms of Industry 4.0 readiness according to global surveys. However, this is not the sentiment shared by SMEs who are slow to adopt these technologies. Among the challenges, they face include a lack of understanding of automation benefits and low awareness on government funding to assist with tech adoption. Last year, about RM5bil was set aside by the government to help businesses embrace smart technology including automation and robotics. We recognise these challenges and are working closely with our partners who have the expertise to assess, recommend and implement appropriate robotics solutions, particularly for companies which are new to automation. We also work with them to provide free cobot workshops to the public. Cobots are more cost effective to

set up compared to traditional industrial robots and can automate a wide range of applications, making automation accessible for businesses of all sizes”.

Robotics Key to Malaysia’s Industry 4.0 Aspirations

In Malaysia, cobots are deployed in an array of industries such as electronics, automotive, semiconductor, furniture and consumer products. Embracing Industry 4.0 is a crucial step forward, especially for the manufacturing industry, of which the SME’s contribution to GDP is targeted to increase to 7.0% by 2020 from the current 5.8% said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed.

According to an A. T. Kearney and Cisco study, Malaysia could reap growth in productivity gains of up to USD30 billion for its manufacturing sector over the next decade through Industry 4.0 adoption.

Participation at AUTOMEX 2019

UR is participating in AUTOMEX – the leading automation and technology exhibition, from 15 to 18 May 2019 at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC). The company will also introduce its flagship e-Series range of cobots at the exhibition.

In addition, visitors can experience the cobots undertaking four industrial applications – assembly, palletising, pick & place & teaching station - at Booth 7225, Hall 7. The cobots will feature various end-effectors, accessories, as well as software from UR+, an online platform that leverages UR’s global ecosystem of third-party developers. Visitors will also be able to experience setting up, installing and programming a UR cobot at the UR Plug and Play solution workshop.