

GTA GOES TO THAILAND AND MALAYSIA MARCH 2024

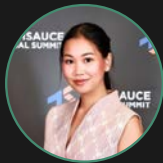
On Monday, 4th March I travelled to Bangkok with several Global Tech Advocates to participate in UK-Southeast Asia Tech Week.

Organised by the UK Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and the Digital Trade Network, the week kicked off in Bangkok, with UK Ambassador to Thailand, Mark Gooding, opening the event. I joined a panel discussion moderated by Chris Bush alongside fellow panelists Izzy Webb from UK Government and Ian Kell, Strategic Advisor for Albeego Solutions, to discuss the strengths of the UK tech sector.

Following the panel, Advocates from #GTASEAL (GTA Southeast Asia Leadership) took to the stage for a discussion on the opportunities for scaling businesses across the region. The session was moderated by Leslie Sarma from Tech Singapore Advocates and GTA Asia Pacific Regional Lead and included the following Advocates:



**AUCHARA 'KATHY'
SURARITTIPOONG**
Tech Thailand
Advocates



**CHIDAPA
CHANTHONG**
Tech Thailand
Advocates



**AARON
SARMA**
Tech Malaysia
Advocates



**RAJ
MENDHIR**
Tech Malaysia
Advocates



**AMOR
MACLANG**
Tech Philippines
Advocates



**NICOLE
NGUYEN**
Tech Vietnam
Advocates



**NICKY VAN
DOMBURG**
Tech Singapore
Advocates



**LESLIE
SARMA**
Tech Singapore
Advocates

At the opening of the discussion we announced that Tech Vietnam Advocates was launching, led by Nicole, and that it would host its first event on fintech later in the week in Ho Chi Minh City when the delegation moved to next.

The GTASEAL met for a fantastic Thai lunch organised by Kathy and Chida, and then we all met up with the delegation at an evening reception.

Many thanks to GTASEAL and DBT for organising a great visit to two vibrant and exciting tech hubs!



Next stop was Kuala Lumpur with a visit hosted by Aaron Sarma and Raj Mendhir, co-leads of Tech Malaysia Advocates.

On 5th March I travelled to Kuala Lumpur to join Aaron and Raj. They organised an evening networking reception with Tech Malaysia Advocates – a great way for me to meet new Advocates in the community since it launched in October 2023.

Aaron and Raj organised a networking reception on the evening of the 5th at the W Hotel just below the iconic Petronas Towers. It was a great opportunity to meet with a variety of Malaysian entrepreneurs, investors, government agencies and ecosystem builders.



The following day, Raj and Aaron kept me busy as they organised a full agenda to expose me to the Malaysian tech sector.

The first stop was breakfast with the CEO of MRANTI / TiPM Dr. Rias Hussin.

We then had coffee with the CEO of Cradle Fund Norman Vanhaecke

The final meeting was with the COO of SIDEC (Selangor Information Technology & Digital Economy Corporation) Loo Chuan Boon

Learn more here:

MRANTI: <https://mranti.my>

Cradle Fund: <https://cradle.com.my>

Cradle Fund MYStartup: <https://cradle.com.my/mystartup/>

SIDEC: <https://www.sidec.com.my>



In my brief time in Malaysia, I asked many questions, and there is clearly a surge in entrepreneurialism creates pools of wealth across the country, which is exciting many leaders and organisations. Many scaling businesses are steadily focusing on consumer products and services – and there is clearly an opportunity to have many of these startups learn to incorporate more digital and technology capabilities.

As an Advocate said to me, ‘Malaysia is much more of a startup than scaleup market at this point’, but for those business which are scaling, there are attempts to get them to expand to other Southeast Asian nations. Beyond ASEAN, key markets for growth include the US, Japan and the UK. Important sectors in tech include agritech, retailtech/ecommerce and fintech.

Raj is organising a one week tech trade mission to Malaysia in October, tied in with Malaysia’s largest tech conference, and you can learn more here.

