

TECH TALENT

KBTG is working with academic and research institutions to groom workers in AI and cybersecurity. **B2**

TECHNOLOGY

KBTG tie-ups designed to build talent

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Kasikorn Business-Technology Group (KBTG), a subsidiary of Kasikornbank (KBank), is gearing up for collaboration with academic and research institutions to groom tech talent through curriculum development and jointly conducting research for innovation in real use cases.

The move aims to improve Thailand's tech capability, particularly in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity and quantum computing, to prepare the country for a "sharp turn" in technological disruption expected in 2024, according to KBTG.

"Thailand has no time to build tech capability as the pandemic is continuing to push digital disruption," said Ruangroj Poonpol, chairman of KBTG. "A sharp turn in technological disruption is expected to happen in 2024."

Digital disruption started around 2016, with a domino effect happening in 2018 when media, commerce, finance and logistics all felt the impact. Over the next decade, digital disruption will persist, he said.

Mr Ruangroj said Thailand needs at least 100,000 people skilled in advanced technologies, such as data engineering, data science and cybersecurity. KBTG needs more than 500 people with tech skills this year.

To help develop more digital tech workers, KBTG embarked on the "Tech Kampus Project" in collaboration with nine organisations. It is working with the National Electronics and Computer

Technology Center and Artificial Intelligence Association of Thailand as well as seven universities: the Asian Institute of Technology, Chulalongkorn University's engineering faculty, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang's information technology faculty, Kasetsart University, Thammasat University's College of Innovation, CMKL University and Mahidol University International College.

KBTG plans to cooperate with them on curriculum development and to improve the quality of education, particularly in the fields of data science and AI, as well as conducting and capitalising on new technology research.

Mr Ruangroj said the programme, which supports curriculum development and allows university students to have hands-on experience through internships, makes it possible for KBTG to save time by developing students before they are hired, a process that normally takes about nine months.

The programme can ensure the time to market for new products is 3-4 times faster, he said.

KBank plans to proceed with research to establish market use cases that can be developed through this programme, said Mr Ruangroj.

Prospective innovations range from biometrics to financial recognition technology to improve online services, he said.

As the bank gears up for regional expansion, serving up to 100 million users, this should stimulate researchers in the programme to figure out products and services that could make an impact on a multitude of users, said Mr Ruangroj.

Thadapong Pongthawornkamol, senior principal visionary architect of Kasikorn Labs, said KBTG needs technological features that can enhance the customer experience and support lean organisational operations.