

Current Progress on Underground Utility Mapping in Malaysia

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SUMMARY

Accurate information of underground utilities is vital for planning and installation of new utilities. This requirement is furthermore critical when it involves excavation of existing utilities for repositioning and etc. The Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (JUPEM) has the mandate to compile and manage underground utility data provided by various utility providers or agencies in Malaysia. The data are retained in a database under a single repository that would serve as a centre for utility data. Lack of knowledge on the whereabouts of these facilities during excavation can result in fatality and catastrophic damages to existing underground utilities. This inevitably may result in disruption to utility services. Industries that depend on these services may suffer greatly in terms of financial loss and in the long run would undermine the country's ability in providing a favourable atmosphere and condition for economic growth. Utility providers are responsible for mapping and keeping their own utility network information accurate and up-to-date. This information is usually kept in their own format, independent of any standards and are used for their internal purposes. Sharing of information at the moment is through agreement between interested parties and through mechanism provided under the Underground Utility Mapping Committee and Malaysia Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MyGDI). Currently, there is no legislation to compel utility providers to deposit their data to JUPEM as the custodian for underground utility data. Without the proper legislation, JUPEM would have to move within the frame of the cabinet decision to implement utility mapping in Malaysia through engagement with all interested parties and stakeholders. JUPEM has taken the necessary short term and long term measures to ensure that the decision to have a single repository for the country is fulfilled. This paper discusses some of the progresses made by JUPEM in particular and the land surveyors as a whole in anticipating and meeting the future demand of utility mapping in Malaysia.