KOTA KINABALU: The launch of Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) Sabah cluster will play a role in raising the current four to seven per cent of hospitality personnel with diploma or higher qualifications in the State.

President of MyCenTHE, Associate Professor Dr Wong Kong Yew, said the MyCenTHE aimed to achieve three key performance indicators (KPI), which included raising the current 16 per cent of workforce with diploma qualifications to 50 per cent by year 2020; to increase the number of diploma holders from 30,000 to 50,000 annually by 2020; and to raise income level from the current average RM1,200 to RM4,000 a month based on the government's vision to become a high income nation by 2020.

MyCenTHE is a national initiative under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) which was launched and led by UCSI University with the aim of providing Malaysia's expanding tourism and hospitality industries with quality human capital.

MyCenTHE Sabah cluster was launched by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) vice-chancellor Professor Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, representing the Minister of Higher Education, Dato' Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, here yesterday.

INTI College Sabah, cluster leader of MyCenTHE in Sabah, has enlisted five-star Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort and Hyatt Regency Kinabalu as partners to provide 10 months of work-based learning for students in the diploma programme.

"MyCenTHE aims to produce good quality workforce for the hospitality and tourism industry, which is in line with Sabah Tourism Board's (STB) effort in promoting the tourism industry in Sabah," Wong said.

"With MyCenTHE playing a role in this, we hope to increase the percentage," he said, adding that INTI College also planned to expand the number of hotel partnerships.

Wong also said that INTI College Sabah had completed the upgrading of its facilities, including for tourism and hospitality training, as well as revised and updated its curriculum and are now offering a work-based Diploma in Hotel Management.

“Our intention is to introduce more MyCenTHE-based courses, which are jointly developed with institution members nationwide, such as the work-based Diploma in Tourism and Event Management, Diploma in Culinary Arts, and Diploma in Retail Management.

"Strong partnership between INTI and MyCenTHE will bring forth a dynamic and cohesive set of programmes that will enable graduates to be part of the highest quality training available, thus opening doors to abundant opportunities," he said.