

# Minimising Time and Processes for the Approval of Application on Development Services

In 1931, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) was established as an agricultural school and by 1947 was named as College of Agriculture Malaya by Sir Edward Gent (Governor of the Malayan Union). The name Universiti Pertanian Malaysia came into being when the College Agriculture in Serdang merged with the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Malaya. In 1997, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia changed its name to Universiti Putra Malaysia by former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohammad to portray the status of UPM as a tertiary education.

UPM provides various studies in various fields with the aim and focus on the enhancement of the latest innovative technology and information in the agriculture sector of Malaysia.

UPM has a total area of 980 thousand square meters and a land area of 1,108 hectares. The enrolment of employees and students in UPM is 31,700.





### Problems arising during approval of applications

A positive workplace will make an organisation the best ambience to work. The physical development and maintenance facilities of a workplace need to have a rigid monitoring system for its success. In UPM, maintenance and physical development can only be performed upon approval of documents from the Asset Management and Development Office (Pejabat Pembangunan dan Pengurusan Aset (PPPA)). PPPA is responsible for managing the physical development and maintenance facilities throughout the campus. PPPA is divided into five zones consisting of academic, technology, residential, medical and agriculture. PPPA consists of 78 staff with 63 technical officers and 15 administrators. The responsibility of the PPPA is to manage the overall physical development and maintenance of facilities in UPM. Their task is also to approve on the applications of development services. About 1,200 applications on development services are received by the PPPA every year.

There were several wastages found during the approval of applications in the past years. The main factor arising was the waiting time which took far too long. It took about 15 days for an approval. The work processes for approval also involved 19 processes. Over excess of photocopies on required documents for approval also contributed to wastages.

### LEAN in simplifying approval for application process

In UPM, positive changes in enhancement towards quality and services provided to customers are instilled to their employees. This culture is introduced to bring about a change to UPM services especially for the approval of application on development services. A team comprising five PPPA staff was set up to rectify the problems. LEAN project was then implemented into the team to carry out the process.

The Why-Why analysis was conducted to detect wastages involved in the approval of application process. The Visual Stream Mapping (VSM) was also included to determine non-value added activities found throughout the process. Based on these findings, the team came up with four Kaizen themes and initiatives to reduce wastages. They are as follows:

KAIZEN THEME	IMPROVEMENT
Speeding process of receiving application forms	Simplify four processes into one computerised processed system.
To have a systematic delivery system of application forms	Online applications are directed straight to the engineers and technicians for approval.
Staff optimisation	Recommendations needed only by investigation officer and engineer.
To shorten time on final approval by the Approval Working Committee	The approval of applications are through circulation, members of committee would give remarks and with authentic approval.

### Analysis of LEAN project in PPPA, UPM

Kaizen initiatives are beneficial to PPPA in overcoming all the hitches in expediting approvals of application on development services. After the implementation of four Kaizen ideas, PPPA process has improved significantly with shorter time of eight days as compared to 15 days previously. Simultaneously, the 19 processes taken

up by PPPA have been reduced to only 14 processes. The overall LEAN results achieved for this project are in the process time of only 424 minutes, waiting time are 3,480 minutes while lead time takes only 3,904 minutes. In summary, Kaizen initiatives have increased benefits to PPPA in terms of eliminating time wastages.

**Matrix before and after LEAN project:**

DESCRIPTION	BEFORE	AFTER
1. Number of days for approval	15	8
2. Number of processes	19	14
3. Process time (minutes)	602	424
4. Waiting time (minutes)	6,520	3,480
5. Lead time (minutes)	7,122	3,904