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Malaysia's remarkably high global rankings for the reliability of electricity supply is a boon for high end equipment manufacturers in our electrical and electronics industry.

Generally the power quality in Malaysia is good but the sophisticated needs of this niche E&E industry requires the supply to have a minimal number of sags in electricity flow to the plants.

Sags refer to a short term fluctuation in voltage which is critical as it takes only but 200 milliseconds for a plant to interrupt any of the automated operations.

In its Doing Business 2020, the World Bank ranked Malaysia as no 4 with a score of 99.3, behind Korea which scored a 99.9 score. In terms of procedures and reliability of supply and transparency of tariff index, Malaysia secured scores of 100.0 respectively with near perfect scores for time (taken in getting electricity) and cost.

The improvement has been steadily rising from 24th, 12th and 8th over the years to the latest 4th position. We are aiming to better our ranking scores by reducing the number of procedures further.

Malaysia's stable power grid is one of the key factors which attracted high-tech manufacturing facilities to park their investments.

Apart from working on the global ranking, our PEMUDAH Technical Working Group for Getting Electricity has been working hard on this dimension of the high end of E&E.

After some benchmarking with other countries on how voltage sags and dips are resolved we found the US was a good comparison as, like Malaysia, the incidence of lightning is high in Arizona state and lightning protection is provided for the electrical lines.

With the help of a multinational corporation based in Malaysia we worked with Tenaga Nasional Bhd on the problem using the Arizona model and found the quality of electricity improved greatly a year later, with fewer sags recorded.

The secret of this achievement lies in sharing operational details with one another, in this case between TNB and the MNC. Instead of the usual finger-pointing as was the case in previous communication, we shared the problems and limitations faced.

It is through regular communication platforms like these that the TWG has been able to take care and resolve issues bothering industries and they have helped to improve the country's ranking.

We benchmark with the world's frontier companies, the best in class and figure out how to get things done in Malaysia and improve the existing infrastructure in the country with the help of the energy utility company as well as the Energy Commission.

In one instance, we got a 50-year old cable supplying electricity replaced with the help of the EC as it was found that the cable was unable to provide support for an industry.

We must thank both TNB and the EC for their willingness to listen to the problems and work together to find solutions and help industries in the country resolve problems.

TWG is now working on a similar voltage sag issue in Kulim Hi-Tech Industrial Park although this time round discussions are being held with NUR Power Sdn Bhd, a private power supplier to the industries which include front end processors and fabricators - susceptible to this kind of sag sensitivity and stability of equipment.

Some other areas we are currently working with the industry on is in the area of improving electricity cables using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), for instance, for cost effectiveness.

On another front, the E&E industry also faces manpower issues and the TWG in collaboration with Malaysia Productivity Corporation has drawn up a number of recommendations to address pressing issues.

In getting Malaysians attracted to the E&E industry, one of the ways is to provide a career path when they get a job by providing certification skills training at the factory's in-house academy.