



THE HANDS THAT SHAPE SARAWAK

THE ALIANCE COLLECTION

FIRST EDITION VOLUME 1



IMMIGRATION & LABOUR MANAGEMENT UNIT
DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER OF SARAWAK



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Metrobrite Engineering: Betting on Sarawakian Hands



The development of Sarawak's physical landscape is an undertaking defined by unique geographical challenges, from the deep peat soils of the coastal plains to the complex river systems of the interior. Within this context, Metrobrite Engineering Sdn Bhd has operated as a key participant in the State's civil and structural engineering sector for nearly four decades.

Established in 1988 and headquartered in

Sibu, with a strategic branch in Kuching, the firm has transitioned from a small-scale private contractor to a Grade G7 entity. This gold standard classification by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) recognises the maturity and technical expertise required to lead major infrastructure projects of any scale. By holding this tender capacity, Metrobrite is able to drive large-scale development through a distinct focus on local human capital.

The Technical Curing Period

The growth of Metrobrite was not an overnight expansion but a deliberate, incremental process that chief executive officer (CEO) Wong Ting Yew describes as humble beginnings.

"We participated in some very small contracts. Humble beginnings to boost our company's speed," says Wong.

When the Metrobrite first started, its initial participation was limited to private sector contracts, often valued between RM20,000 and RM50,000. While these figures are modest in the context of modern infrastructure, they served vital in setting the foundation for the firm's technical and administrative systems.

"It was a long process as we grew. In those days, a contract of RM20,000 to RM50,000 was already a big achievement," he muses.

In civil engineering, integrity is a structural requirement. Wong identifies this early period as the time when the company's reputation for delivery was established. The logic was pragmatic: if a firm cannot demonstrate precision and reliability on a small-scale

renovation or drainage project, it cannot be trusted with Sarawak's primary arteries.

This period of practising integrity allowed Metrobrite to slowly transition into government registration. By the time the company achieved its G7 status, the internal culture was already accustomed to the rigours of high-stakes delivery.

Today, that same discipline is applied to multi-million-ringgit contracts, reflecting a long-term commitment to the belief that engineering precision is built on the groundwork of consistent, smaller successes.

"We gained recognition because generally, people know that our company will deliver. This is the kind of confidence we have gathered, and it is how we continue to operate today."

The Local Execution Model

Metrobrite's current technical capabilities are best exemplified by its work on the Sarawak Coastal Road Network; specifically, the Batang Rajang Bridge, which is also known as the Sarikei-Tanjung Manis Bridge.

This Sarawak Coastal Road Network



is a critical component of the State's infrastructure master plan, designed to bridge the connectivity gap between major coastal settlements. It involves significant engineering hurdles, including the construction of bridges and road networks over unstable soil conditions and through remote terrain.

What differentiates Metrobrite's approach to such large-scale works is the refusal to default to foreign contracting, keeping the working hands localised.

"Almost 100 per cent of our work, we do it

ourselves," Wong explains.

This is a technical choice as much as an economic one. By recruiting Sarawakian manpower and developing construction technologies in-house, often in collaboration with West Malaysian partners—Metrobrite ensures that the technical know-how generated during the project remains a permanent asset of the State.

When a project is subcontracted to foreign nationals, the expertise departs upon the project's completion. By contrast, Metrobrite's model ensures that the site

engineers, supervisors, and operators from Sarawak are the ones who master the latest bridge-engineering software or earthwork methodologies.

"A lot of things we do it ourselves," he reiterates. "I firmly believe that the economy needs to remain in Sarawak."

This keeps the ringgit within the State and progressively upgrades the technical ceiling of the local workforce. For a government focused on the Post COVID-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030), this model of strategic localism is an essential component of building a self-sufficient, high-income state.

Under One Roof Doctrine

For Metrobrite, the execution level, comprising key roles such as professional engineers, quantity surveyors, safety officers, and skilled mechanics, is treated as an integrated asset. Wong manages the firm under the "under one roof" doctrine, a management philosophy that views the workforce as a family unit. This is not merely a social sentiment but a practical strategy for workforce retention and stability.

The validity of this doctrine was tested during the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis that forced many construction firms to halt operations and reduce payroll. Metrobrite adhered to government safety protocols while maintaining a policy of full monthly wage payments.

The decision was a strategic investment in the company's long-term resilience. By ensuring that employees remained financially secure, Metrobrite avoided the labour shortages that hampered the industry during the post-pandemic recovery.

This commitment to the workforce persists today through an unstinting approach to professional development. Metrobrite actively encourages its employees to further their studies, attend seminars, and pursue part-time degrees.

"Any kind of training or seminar that I believe is beneficial—even further part-time studies, I always encourage my employees to pursue it."

The company views these as essential upgrades to its collective capability. This fosters a lean organisational structure where

employees are empowered to move into leadership roles, knowing their contributions are recognised and their welfare is a corporate priority.

**Thinking Correctly,
Build for the Unexpected**

As the industry moves toward greater digitalisation and automation, the process of finding the right talent has become increasingly complex. Wong points out a contemporary challenge: the rise of AI-generated resumes that present a wonderful theoretical image of a candidate but often mask a lack of practical aptitude.

“When we recruit them, we start from the very beginning through observation and most importantly, just to get to know their attitude,” shares Wong. For Metrobrite, the recruitment process has reverted to a more observational, long-term approach. The firm looks for a specific mental trait: the ability to anticipate the unexpected.

In the field, engineering plans are subject to the volatility of the Sarawakian climate and terrain. For Wong, an engineer should never surrender control to the process and

assume that complications will resolve themselves—or, in his words, “expect things to go on autopilot mode.” Instead, he believes a professional must remain present, ensuring every challenge is met with precise, intentional solutions.

Metrobrite’s mentorship focuses on teaching young recruits to “think correctly”, to pre-empt risks before they manifest and to take ownership of mistakes. Wong is vocal about encouraging his staff not to fear making mistakes, provided those errors lead to a better understanding of the work. This focus on thinking over following is what allows the company to maintain its high standards in face of unpredictable site conditions.

“When circumstances do not come up to your expectations, you must learn how to think properly. How to mitigate the situation.”

A Diversified Portfolio

Metrobrite’s capabilities are not limited to road networks. The company maintains a diverse portfolio that anchors regional growth across multiple sectors:



Civil and Structural Engineering: The foundational earthworks and structural skeletons of Sarawak’s rising urban centres.

Marine Structures and Bridges: Bridging the physical gaps in the State’s geography to create a more connected society.

Residential and Public Amenities: Building the

homes and facilities that anchor communities in both urban and rural districts.

Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) Solutions: Ensuring that infrastructure is not just built, but operational and safe.

The synergy between the company’s various arms, including departments such as Finance,



Project Management, General Affairs, and Human Resources (HR), requires a high level of integrated excellence. These represent just a few of the moving parts within a larger, synchronised machine managed through a clear hierarchy of execution.

From professional engineers and quantity surveyors to safety officers, foremen, and skilled operators, every level of the organisation is designed to remain steady even as the company undergoes a period of rapid expansion.

While Metrobrite began with a modest, close-knit team, the firm has consistently scaled its operations to meet the increasing demands of the region. Having grown from its early days into a workforce of over 100, and eventually reaching nearly 300 employees today, the company now stands at a significant turning point.

As the project pipeline accelerates, leadership anticipates the team will continue to climb, with the headcount expected to rise toward a milestone of 600 to 700 staff members in the near future. As the company prepares for this next phase

of growth, the focus remains on ensuring that expansion never comes at the cost of character. The priority is to fill these roles with local Sarawakian talent; professionals who are trained to not only navigate complex projects but to uphold the firm's 38-year legacy of integrity. This steady climb in numbers is more than just a headcount; it is a commitment to ensuring that as Metrobrite grows, so too does the local community it serves.

Engineering Sarawak's Self-Reliance

The goal of Metrobrite is to serve its home. This is reflected in the company's statement: "When we work together, we build a better tomorrow!"

It is a call to action that extends beyond the company's walls to the State at large. By ensuring that almost 100 per cent of their work is done in-house, the firm acts as a bulwark against the economic leakage that often accompanies large-scale development.

Wong's philosophy is rooted in the belief that for Sarawak to become a high-income

state by 2030, its companies must be more than just contractors; they must be institutions that foster skill, dignity, and wealth within the local community.

The ebb and flow of the company's growth, from its humble start in 1988 to its current status, is proof to the fact that integrity and a commitment to one's people are the most durable materials a company can use.

Metrobrite stands as a reminder of the value of the local hand. The company's story is not one of rapid, flashy expansion, but of nearly four decades of disciplined endeavour and a refusal to compromise on the quality of its people. By treating every bridge, road, and home as a milestone in the

State's development, Metrobrite has laid the groundwork for infrastructure that lasts.

For the government and the people of Sarawak, the company represents a vital link in the chain of progress. It is a firm that proves that when a company readily invests in its human capital and remains committed to its local roots, it can transform even the most significant engineering challenges into shared successes.

As the number of employees gradually increases to meet the needs of a developing nation, Metrobrite's focus remains unchanged: engineering precision, local empowerment, and a better tomorrow for all Sarawakians.





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