



Global Compact
Network
Malaysia & Brunei

Breaking Barriers in Port Operations: PTP's Journey to Advance Women Across Operational and Technical Roles

A Case Study of



A Member of MMC Group



Knowledge Partner:



Pelabuhan Tanjung Pelepas Sdn Bhd (Port of Tanjung Pelepas)

Empowering Women Across the Workforce: Building an Inclusive and Future-Ready Port Ecosystem



Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) is one of Malaysia's leading container terminals and a key gateway for global trade, operating at the intersection of logistics, infrastructure, and economic development. As a strategic port operator, PTP recognises that operational excellence and long-term competitiveness depend not only on infrastructure and technology, but also on an inclusive, skilled, and resilient workforce.

What distinguishes PTP's approach is its deliberate focus on advancing women's participation across both operational and technical roles—challenging traditional gender norms within a male-dominated port and logistics environment. Through targeted policies, workforce programmes, and workplace enablers,

PTP is strengthening gender equity across its operations while creating pathways for women to participate and progress in technical, operational, and leadership roles.

Company At A Glance

- Industry: Maritime and logistics industry
- Headquarters: Gelang Patah, Johor
- Workforce: 6,568 (as of October 2025)

The Challenge

Ports operate in fast-paced 3D environments—dangerous, dirty, and demeaning—historically dominated by men. Globally, only 1–3% of frontline maritime workers are women, and PTP reflected this trend across operational, technical, and shift-based roles.

The turning point came through honest conversations with female employees who highlighted barriers such as unsafe rest areas, male-centric shift systems, limited access to technical training, and workplace cultures that discouraged participation.

For example, quay crane operators work in cabins suspended nearly 100 metres above ground, exposed to strong winds and constant movement while handling multi-tonne containers, underscoring the high level of technical competence, physical resilience and situational awareness required in these roles.

Senior Management, supervisors and managers affirmed women's potential, proving it wasn't ability that needed change—it was conditions. Externally, industry partners and customers were calling for sustainability, fair employment, and gender-balanced workforces. Community groups and educational institutions also highlighted how the absence of role models deterred young women from entering industrial careers.

Collectively, these insights drove PTP's commitment to long-term, structural change—to build a safe, respectful, and inclusive port environment where women could thrive not at the margins, but at the core.

The Action

Shaped by a listening-first approach, PTP translated insight into strategic intent, followed by deliberate action:

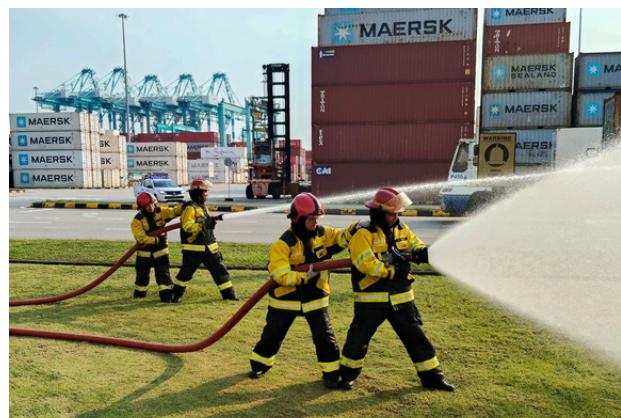
1. Start with Listening

Women in operational and technical roles were invited to share honest experiences and career aspirations. These conversations exposed the gap between policy and reality, forming the

foundation for all subsequent actions.

2. Remove Barriers to Entry

Training opportunities were opened to women from diverse backgrounds, including those with no prior industrial experience. Structured programmes equipped them with the technical, safety, and professional skills needed to succeed in operational roles, including prime mover drivers, quay crane operators, rubber-tyred gantry (RTG) crane operators, reliability engineers, fire and emergency responders, and marine harbour pilots.



3. Create Safe and Dignified Workspaces

Women-only rest lounges, mothers' rooms, and designated parking for pregnant employees were introduced—not as symbolic gestures, but as direct responses to employee feedback.

4. Build Peer Support and Networking

Peer-support groups and networking circles were created to reduce isolation and offer a space for shared learning, encouragement, and professional growth.

5. Expand Career Pathways

Beyond entry roles, women were supported to progress into specialist and leadership positions. From quay crane operators to technical trainers, their journeys demonstrated structured, long-term mobility.

6. Engage Leaders and Shift Culture

Leaders and managers were engaged through awareness and education focused on fairness, dignity, and inclusion. Gender inclusion was embedded into planning and operations.

7. Principle-Driven Approach

Each step was anchored in real employee experiences, with a focus on enabling long-term careers rather than meeting quotas.

Enablers For Sustainability Performance And Impact



Leadership & Culture

Senior leaders adopt a listening-first approach, ensuring decisions are grounded in real experiences. Their commitment to respect, fairness, and inclusion creates a safe space for women to voice challenges and aspirations. Leadership positioned the initiative as a long-term transformation rather than a symbolic campaign.



Strategy

The initiative aligns with PTP's sustainability and workforce strategy, advancing decent work, equal opportunity, and long-term community impact. Empowering women in operational and technical roles strengthens gender equality, fair employment, and organisational resilience. Broadening access to all roles supports an adaptable, future-ready workforce.



Process

Recruitment pathways are designed to ensure fair access. Training and mentorship programmes are structured to build safety, confidence, and skills across technical and operational areas. Workflows for scheduling, equipment access, and

operational zoning are reviewed to remove barriers. Support facilities are integrated across operations to meet employee needs throughout every shift.



Governance

Cross-functional committees oversee inclusion, safety, facilities, and training standards. Employee feedback is systematically reviewed to inform decisions. Policies on equal opportunity, safety, and anti-discrimination provide a consistent framework at all levels.



Resources

The initiative is funded through operational and development budgets. Investments are focused on training, safety certifications, infrastructure, mentorship, and capacity building.



People

Women employees identify challenges and guide key decisions. Male colleagues and supervisors support inclusion efforts. Career progression demonstrated integration into organisational culture, with the initiative seen as a core part of how PTP operates through role recognition.



ESG Data

Workforce representation data identifies areas for improvement. Retention data highlight the impact of training, facilities, and career pathways. Operational data ensures inclusion outcomes are measurable and performance-based.



Digital Transformation

Training includes digital learning and simulation tools. Platforms track skill development, certifications, and safety competencies. Sensor data and predictive maintenance software are used for data-driven, innovation-focused work.



Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

PTP engages education and community partners to promote industrial and professional careers for women. Industry partners support inclusion as a business priority. Community insights shape policies, facilities, and programmes.



Supply Chain and Procurement

Suppliers are encouraged to adopt inclusive practices. Engagements and audits lead to updated recruitment and training approaches, extending the impact of PTP's initiative beyond its own operations.

Overcoming Barriers

In advancing women's participation in the company, PTP has placed the KPI of increasing the number of women in operational and technical roles onto our CEO and has made gender inclusion a permanent agenda in senior management meetings. We have made efforts to navigate interrelate structural, operational, and cultural barriers common within port environments.

1. Structural and Cultural Barriers to Women's Participation

As a traditionally male-dominated industry, port operations presented both structural and cultural barriers to women's entry and progression. These included low representation in operational roles, persistent perceptions around job suitability, and confidence-related challenges among women considering non-traditional career paths.

PTP recognised that increasing participation required more than policy changes—it necessitated deliberate cultural shifts to normalise women's presence, build confidence, and strengthen organisational acceptance

across functions and seniority levels.

2. Workplace Design and 24-Hour Operational Safety

Operating within a 24-hour port environment posed practical challenges related to workplace design, facilities, and safety—particularly for women in operational and technical roles.

PTP reviewed infrastructure, amenities, and safety protocols to ensure they were gender-inclusive and fit for purpose, with specific attention to mobility within operational zones and safety considerations during night and shift work.

3. Talent Pipeline and Skills Readiness

A limited pipeline of women with exposure to port and maritime operations constrained recruitment and succession planning.

To address this, PTP strengthened targeted recruitment, structured training, and internal development pathways to equip women with the technical, operational, and leadership capabilities required for progression.

4. Sustaining Retention and Career Progression

Beyond entry, sustaining retention and advancement remained a key challenge.

PTP identified the need for ongoing engagement, mentorship, and clear progression pathways to support women's long-term career development and reduce attrition across different career and life stages.

Impact and Results

PTP's efforts to advance women across both operational and technical roles have delivered measurable workforce outcomes while reshaping what inclusion looks like within a 24-hour port environment.

1. Improved Representation and Retention in Operational Roles

Targeted recruitment, inclusive workplace design, and sustained support have translated into tangible gains in women's participation and retention - particularly in roles traditionally dominated by men.

Key outcomes include:



Women now represent **7% of PTP's combined operational and technical workforce**, compared to an estimated **1-3% industry average**



10% of prime mover drivers are women



Five women marine pilots trained and employed — a historic milestone in Malaysia.



92% retention rate for women in operational roles in 2024, compared to **85% for men**

These results reflect both successful entry into non-traditional roles and strong retention once women are onboarded.

2. Career Growth and Internal Mobility

Beyond representation, the initiative has enabled women to progress across technical, specialist, and leadership pathways—demonstrating that port careers can be sustainable and long term.

Women have been trained, certified, and promoted into roles including:



Crane operators and RTG operators



Reliability engineers and fire officers



Advanced Technical Trainers and specialist executive positions

Several participants have progressed from blue-collar entry roles into white-collar or specialist functions, underscoring the effectiveness of structured development and internal mobility pathways.

3. Empowerment Through Visibility and Individual Progress

Greater visibility of women in operational and technical roles has reinforced confidence, professional pride, and aspiration across the workforce.

Supported by peer networks, mentorship, and visible role models, women are stepping into roles once viewed as unattainable. Individual journeys highlight the depth of transformation enabled by the initiative, including:



Captain Nurul Arrienne

Malaysia's first female Marine Harbour Pilot



Captain Emanuel Janta Anak Mujah

The first female harbour pilot from East Malaysia and PTP's second female harbour pilot in Malaysia.



Nurul Farhana Madani

Transitioned from religious teacher to prime mover driver, later progressing to RTG and quay crane operator



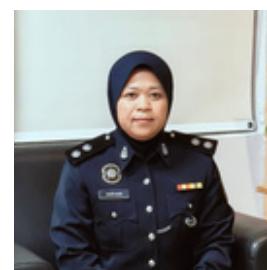
Nur Athira Huda

PTP's first female reliability engineer, now mentoring TVET students



Adilah Ahmad

Started as a prime mover driver, now a fire officer in the Emergency Services team.



Noraini Saat

Progressed from frontline operational roles to an executive position within the Port Police Department.



Noraini Jaffer



Syahiedah Humaira Sahri

Advanced Technical Trainers
and Port Equipment Technicians

Together, these stories demonstrate how sustained support can translate into meaningful career mobility across operational and professional tracks.

4. Organisational Culture Shift

The initiative has contributed to a broader cultural shift within PTP, where inclusion is increasingly understood as an organisational norm rather than a standalone programme.

Leaders and teams demonstrate greater openness to women's participation across roles, while women report feeling safer, respected, and more confident in pursuing advancement and leadership opportunities.

5. Strengthened Stakeholder Confidence and Ecosystem Impact

PTP's approach has generated positive spillover effects beyond the organisation.

- **Community partners and educational institutions cite PTP role models as inspiration for young women considering industrial careers**
- **Industry peers increasingly view PTP as a reference point for gender inclusion in port operations**
- **The initiative is recognised as substantive and values-driven, strengthening trust, engagement, and reputation across the port ecosystem**

Key Lessons Learned

1. Start with Listening

Meaningful change begins with understanding employees' lived experiences, daily challenges, and aspirations. Honest feedback and safe spaces for dialogue help reveal gaps between intention and reality. Training pathways, safe workspaces, and mentorship are most effective when they are rooted in real needs rather than assumptions or symbolic gestures.

2. Combine Practical Support with Cultural Change

Infrastructure and culture must move hand in hand. Facilities such as mothers' rooms, women-only rest areas, and designated parking are essential, but they must be accompanied by an environment where women feel respected, supported, and valued. Allyship, mentorship, peer-support circles, and visible role models help shift mindsets and embed inclusion into everyday culture.

3. Be Patient, Persistent, and Proactive

Cultural shifts in male-dominated industries take time and require consistency. Small, ongoing actions gradually build confidence and change perceptions. Proactive engagement of male colleagues through communication and allyship reduces hesitation early on, while reaching women outside the organisation sooner helps raise awareness of industrial and technical career opportunities and strengthens the talent pipeline.

4. Collaborate and Co-Create

Involving women directly in the design of facilities ensures they are practical, safe, and user-friendly from day one. Collaboration with internal stakeholders, educational institutions, external

partners, and industry peers strengthens sustainability and extends impact beyond the organisation, creating positive ripple effects across the wider ecosystem.

5. Measure, Learn, and Improve Continuously

Tracking representation, retention, and career progression allows progress to be measured and gaps to be identified. Combining data with personal stories reinforces credibility and highlights real impact. Introducing digital learning platforms, simulations, and mentorship tools early accelerates learning, while continuous listening and adaptation ensure the workplace remains inclusive, supportive, and resilient over time.

Since joining the UN Global Compact (UNGC) in 2022, PTP has actively participated in initiatives such as the Forward Faster Sustainability Awards through the UN Global Compact Network Malaysia & Brunei and contributed to UNGC-led discussions, including the Accenture CEO Study. These engagements provided valuable guidance to strengthen PTP's sustainability strategies, including its initiative to empower women in blue-collar roles.

Aligned with the UNGC's Ten Principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption, the initiative was grounded in dignity, equity, and inclusion. Principle 6 on eliminating discrimination validated internal concerns and reinforced leadership commitment.

The initiative also supports SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), positioning gender inclusion as both a workplace and societal priority. Participation in the UNGC community enabled peer learning, benchmarking, and accountability—helping PTP evolve its listening-first approach into a structured, principled, and sustainable transformation that empowers women to thrive with dignity, safety, and confidence.



“ One of the greatest lessons in my leadership journey has been truly listening to women's voices. When women support women, confidence grows, barriers fall and new possibilities open. This is especially clear in operational and technical roles within the 3D environment of ports, where the work is demanding, complex and challenging. Creating spaces that are safe, respectful and empowering allows women to thrive. Investing in women with care and intention strengthens their growth and builds a resilient workforce that shapes the future of our organisation. **”**

Majidah Hashim,
Head of Sustainability, Port of Tanjung Pelepas



THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT



HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



LABOUR

- 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



ENVIRONMENT

- 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- 8 undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- 9 encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

ABOUT UN GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK MALAYSIA & BRUNEI

United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is a strategic policy initiative for businesses that are committed to take actions to advance broader societal goals. UN Global Compact Network Malaysia & Brunei (UNGCMYB), the official country network of UNGC, is the leading advocate for business sustainability action in Malaysia and Brunei. We empower both corporates and SMEs through value-creating initiatives across learning, connections, and enablers to Forward Faster a collective sustainable future. We support Malaysian and Bruneian companies in aligning with the Ten Principles and contributing meaningfully to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while providing access to partnerships, tools and knowledge sharing to advance responsible business practices.

Talk to us about joining us or visit our website at www.ungcmyb.org



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