

Iskandar Malaysia BRT to commence three-month pilot testing programme, licensing process in April

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Automated Rapid Transit in China

The Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA) has announced in a statement that a pilot testing programme for the **Iskandar Malaysia Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** will commence on April 8, 2021. This will be a three-month long programme that will see demonstrations of new, green technology buses with electric and hybrid powertrains, with the involvement of nine local and international bus suppliers.

The IRDA and relevant stakeholders will also evaluate and obtain approval for licenses that are required for the new green technology buses, as well as obtain feedback from the relevant government agencies in the overall test, said the IRDA, who also added that further details will be released this week.

Managed by Mobilus, a 51:49 joint venture between Ireka Corporation and CRRC Urban Traffic, the first automated rapid transit (ART) system arrived in Johor in January for its pilot testing programme in Iskandar Malaysia. The test schedule was originally planned for 2020, though this was postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak.



The ART is classed as a medium-capacity transit system for urban passenger transport, enabling a higher passenger capacity at a lower cost of implementation compared to light-rail systems, and will run on clean energy sources such as electricity or hydrogen.

The vehicles will have a capacity of more than 300 passengers across three carriages, and this can be expanded to accommodate around 500 passengers over five carriages, according to a January report by [The Edge Markets](#).

The vehicles are manufactured by the China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC) which previously made the KTM Intercity carriages, and its batteries can yield a range of up to 24 km following a 10-minute charge. These can travel at up to 70 km/h and can navigate its own route autonomously with sensors, though a driver can still be tasked with its operation for an added safety net.

The implementation of the ART pilot project will be a key step towards aiding in the improvement of public transport in Iskandar Malaysia as well as for the promotion of rapid development of the region's economy and society, said Ireka group managing director Datuk Lai Voon Hon.