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Equinix bets on sustainable digital infrastructure

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Company prioritises technologies that reduce reliance on potable water

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CYBERJAYA: As Malaysia accelerates its ambitions in artificial intelligence (AI), cloud adoption and digital economy growth, the conversation around digital infrastructure is evolving beyond adding capacity to ensuring infrastructure can scale responsibly, efficiently and sustainably over the long term.

For global digital infrastructure company Equinix, sustainability is becoming a key consideration in how data centres are planned, designed and operated as AI workloads drive demand for greater computing power, cooling capacity and connectivity.

Equinix Malaysia managing director Cheam Tat Inn (***pic***) said the conversation around digital infrastructure is no longer about how quickly capacity can be added, but how infrastructure can scale responsibly, efficiently and sustainably over the long term.

"It is no longer only about how quickly capacity can be added, but how infrastructure can scale responsibly, efficiently and sustainably over the long term," he said during a media briefing in Cyberjaya recently.

Equinix's sustainability strategy, known as Future First, is built around three pillars – growing digital infrastructure sustainably, driving social progress and leading with integrity.

According to its 2025 Sustainability Report, Equinix achieved 96% renewable energy coverage across its retail International Business Exchange (IBX) data centres globally, marking the eighth consecutive year that renewable energy coverage exceeded 90%.

The company also recorded a 5.3% year-on-year improvement in power usage effectiveness (PUE), bringing its global average PUE to 1.37, while its global average water usage effectiveness (WUE) stood at 0.91.

Equinix invested US$36 million (RM153 million) globally to improve energy efficiency in 2025 and currently has 29 power purchase agreements (PPAs) under contract, representing more than 1,400MW of renewable energy capacity across 12 countries.

More than 600 customers accessed Equinix's Green Power Reports during the year, while the company exported 19 gigawatt-hours of recovered heat for community use.

In Malaysia, Equinix has achieved 100% renewable energy coverage across its operations and is continuing to build on this achievement while exploring additional renewable energy pathways, including participation in emerging mechanisms such as the Corporate Renewable Energy Supply Scheme (CRESS).

Equinix said its approach in Malaysia focuses on supporting digital growth while minimising unnecessary pressure on local infrastructure by working closely with utility providers, regulators and ecosystem partners.

The company said it works closely with Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB), regulators and relevant stakeholders to align infrastructure expansion with long-term grid planning, electricity availability and the country's broader energy transition priorities.

Equinix added that it adopts a disciplined, demand-led approach to expansion, where growth is guided by customer demand, infrastructure readiness and sustainability considerations rather than speculative capacity additions.

Water stewardship has also become a key component of its sustainability strategy in Malaysia.

The company said it is moving beyond water-intensive evaporative cooling approaches and conducts local water and environmental assessments before selecting cooling systems for new developments.

Equinix added that it prioritises technologies that reduce reliance on potable water, including closed-loop cooling systems and alternative water sources where appropriate.

Its upcoming KL2 data centre in Cyberjaya will incorporate closed-loop cooling architecture, where coolant circulates within a sealed system to absorb heat before being cooled and reused, helping reduce continuous water withdrawal and discharge.

The facility has also been designed specifically for Malaysia's tropical climate to balance energy efficiency, water stewardship and operational reliability.

Separately, Equinix Malaysia managing director Cheam Tat Inn said AI now accounts for more than 80% of Equinix's deployments.

"For Equinix, more than 80% of our deployments currently are AI related," he said during a recent media briefing.

To support growing AI demand, Equinix is investing more than US$190 million (RM800 million) in KL2, which will provide more than 2,200 cabinets upon full build-out.

The facility has been designed to support AI, cloud, enterprise and high-density digital workloads, with advanced cooling capabilities integrated from the design phase.

Equinix said KL2 will be equipped with liquid cooling capabilities, including direct-to-chip, direct-to-rack and direct-to-cage options based on customer requirements.

Beyond computing infrastructure, Equinix said interconnection is becoming increasingly important as enterprises adopt distributed AI and hybrid multicloud architectures.

More than two-thirds of customers at its KL1 facility already operate across multiple metropolitan markets, reflecting growing demand for integrated digital architectures spanning Kuala Lumpur, Johor and Singapore.

Through Equinix Fabric, customers are able to access secure, low-latency connectivity to major cloud providers, network operators and internet exchanges including DE-CIX and MyIX.

Equinix Fabric Geo Zones also enables organisations to keep data traffic within defined geographic boundaries, supporting compliance with Malaysia's Personal Data Protection Act and emerging AI governance requirements.