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Malaysia seeks biotechnology ties with French agency

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Having established biotechnology partnerships with Japan and the US, Malaysia hopes to forge one more with a French organisation, said Science, Technology and Environment Minister, Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding.

"I hope the French Agency for International Business Development (Ubifrance) and Malaysia's National Biotechnology Directorate (Biotek) will look into the matter and submit a proposal," he said after launching a three-day exhibition and conference on France Tech 2002 here today.

The event showcased French expertise in intelligent transport systems, environment, biotechnology, digital television broadcasting and professional training. It was organised by Ubifrance and the Economic Department of the French Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Also present at the opening ceremony was French ambassador to Malaysia, Xavier Driencourt.

Law said the opportunities for the two countries lie not just in research and development but also in business development, adding Malaysia is rich in bioresources and France, advanced technology.

Malaysia's partnership with Japan's Bioindustry Association comes under the Japanese-Malaysia Partnership Programme, which saw Malaysian scientists trained in laboratories in Japan while scientists from Japan were attached to laboratories here.

Under the directive of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia developed a Malaysia-MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Biotechnology Partnership Programme, aimed at developing further the foundation for the development of sustainable biotechnology in Malaysia.

Earlier in his speech, Law said Malaysia must acquire and develop skills in the application of enabling technologies if the country was to leapfrog its progress in biotechnology.

Biotek managing director Prof Dr Ali Latif Ibrahim, in his presentation on the development of biotechnology in Malaysia, said Biotek has proposed to the Government to set up three national biotechnology institutes.

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