

# Incentives for biotechfirms

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THE government will provide the best infrastructure for biotechnology firms making their base in Malaysia's BioValley.

Energy, Communications and Multimedia Deputy Minister Datuk Tan Chai Ho said the government was ready to ensure that companies taking part in the project situated in Dengkil received privileges in terms of cables and communication lines for Internet access, as well as facilities such as data and fax transfer.

"We are ready to give these facilities. This is a pioneer project. At present, none of the package incentives have been finalised.

"The government will announce later the incentive package," he said in an interview on Sunday.

Earlier, he launched the *INS Zhen-Ao S. Bean* extract and *INS Holdings Bhd's* 7th anniversary celebration.

The incentive package could include special rates for electricity and water supply and cheaper telephone charges, Tan said.

"However, this is still under study," he said, adding that the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry was negotiating with Telekom Malaysia Bhd and Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) for the special rates.

Tan was responding to a suggestion by *INS* chief executive officer Datuk Yeat Sew Chuong

that the government offer packages such as cheaper electricity rates and special tax incentives to attract biotechnology firms to set up their hub in BioValley.

Computer and software companies relocating to the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and Cyberjaya currently enjoy facilities such as high-speed transport and advanced fibre-optic networks.

Meanwhile, those with MSC-status are also given performance guarantees by TNB and the Waterworks Department.

BioValley was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on May 20.

Yeat said: "We were told that these incentives will take the government two months to finalise. At present, the land provided to our factory is free but we don't know for how long.

"However, I hope the government will also take the initiative to attract professionals and scientists to work in biotechnology companies in Malaysia.

"We have much raw resources but unfortunately, we lack the professionals in this field," he said.

He added that *INS* was in the process of recruiting three scientists from China's top-ranking universities for its research and development work.

*INS* had invested an initial RM25mil in its factory and research and development work at BioValley, he said.