

20 MAY 2003

Law-Biotechnology

BIOVALLEY MALAYSIA TO HAVE THREE CORE NATIONAL INSTITUTES

DENGKIL, May 20 (Bernama) -- BioValley Malaysia, which had its ground-breaking ceremony here today, will have three core national institutes, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding said.

The three institutes are the Agro-Biotechnology Institute, the Pharmaceutical and Nutraceutical Institute and the Genomics and Molecular Biology Institute. All three institutions were expected to be fully completed and operational by 2006, he said.

He said the BioValley Development Corporation would also be established to manage the development of BioValley Malaysia, located on a 200-hectare (500-acre) site south of Cyberjaya, the nation's multimedia hub.

"BioValley Malaysia would act as a hub and consolidate all ongoing biotechnology initiatives across the country, and also assist, coordinate and promote the commercialisation of the findings and products of its stakeholders, namely ministries, state governments, government agencies and institutions of higher learning," he said.

He was speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony of the BioValley Malaysia project by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Under the first phase of BioValley Malaysia, 80 hectares would be developed at a cost of RM100 million.

It would be home to a wide spectrum of biotechnology-related activities such as drug research and bio-processes operating on different platform technologies.

"Biotechnology companies located in BioValley would enjoy world-class infrastructure and a conducive work environment with shared facilities and services such as advanced communications systems, network infrastructure and business support services," Law said.

The full support and cooperation of all key stakeholders were vital for BioValley Malaysia to be successfully implemented, he said.

A master plan is also being developed to ensure BioValley Malaysia evolves into a self-contained community, equipped with the necessary research, commercial, educational, recreational and residential facilities by 2009.

To help create this new community at BioValley Malaysia, the Selangor state investment arm, Kumpulan Hartanah Selangor, would be involved in providing complementary recreational and housing amenities.

Meanwhile, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo said the state government would give its full support and commitment to the development of the BioValley project.

"Currently, the state has identified biotechnology-related companies in Selangor and steps will be taken to attract these companies to BioValley Malaysia. This is also part of our plan to prepare ourselves in facing the challenges of the global market," he said at the function.

He said Kumpulan Hartanah Selangor had been given the mandate to implement the project on the initial phase of 320 hectares (800 acres) based on a smart partnership concept with the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry.

"In the initial phase, the ministry would utilise 200 acres of the total land for development of three biotechnology institutes. Kumpulan Hartanah Selangor will in return provide the supporting facilities such as the residential, recreation centre and public amenities," he said.

He was confident that Selangor with its rich diverse bio-resources would be able to contribute towards the enhancement of biotechnology research and development in the country.

-- BERNAMA

SR AZZ YBY