

17/03/2005

Ways for local biotechnology sector to move forward

By Rozana Sani

THE Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) is expected to engage the biotechnology industry in a dialogue session today for its input on ways to move forward in a run-up to the submission of a proposal on the National Biotechnology Policy to the Government.

Those attending are looking forward to gain an insight on the proposal entitled The New Way Forward for Biotechnology in Malaysia, which is expected to provide a clearer direction for the industry.

The only indication of a blueprint for the industry was last seen in the Biovalley project, a proposed hub for biotechnology companies located south of Cyberjaya launched by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 2003, which has yet to materialise.

Earlier this week, Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis said under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, Mosti will be "totally revisiting the incentives for the knowledgebased industry in the light of biotech". Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, he said, has instructed the Ministry to look at global developments such as what India and China are doing regarding their biotech sectors.

Other than looking outward, Mosti should also engage internal parties which have a particular interest in biotech such as the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, Agriculture Ministry, and agencies like the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Rubber Research Institute and Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia as these entities have long been in the biotech business.

This way, there will be a proper, cohesive framework for the biotech sector, making it easier for local players and investors to plan and build their businesses here. When plans and policies are not properly streamlined, there is bound to be confusion among investors and industry players alike. This then will drive them to find solutions elsewhere.

(END) Source : New Straits Times