

**Going nuclear: 'Need to decide now, not later'**  
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The country should plan to have nuclear-generated energy now rather than later, as it would take a long time for such facilities to be developed, Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Peter Chin said today.

He said there were several procedures which needed to be followed, including compliance to the International Atomic Energy Agency requirements on the development of nuclear-driven energy plants.

"At the same time, as our population grows, their needs and energy demands would also grow. As a minister responsible, I feel this option (nuclear power plant) must be taken into planning," he told reporters here.

nuclear power plantHe said this when asked whether nuclear energy would be among alternatives explored by a laboratory set up under the National Key Economic Area (NKEA) for the oil, gas and energy sector.

"The lab (laboratory) also explored the potentials of other renewable energy like solar, biomass and hydroelectric," added Chin, who is also joint-chairman of the NKEA oil, gas and energy sector, together with Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak.

He said the laboratory would present its report by August this year.

He said the private sector, particularly energy resource players, had provided key inputs as the government had decided to intensify their participation in generating energy to drive the country's economy.

The inclusion of the sector as one of the 12 NKEAs announced by Najib reflected the government's concern on the crucial role of the sector to attain the momentum to achieve a developed nation status by 2020, noted Chin.

"In fact, the oil, gas and energy sector had been, over the years, the largest contributor to the Gross National Income," he said.

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