

# NCER needs RM177bil

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## Govt to put in initial investment, followed by corporations



**ALOR STAR:** The Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) requires RM177bil in investments over the next 19 years, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said two-thirds of the investments would come from the private sector, including through private funding initiatives (PFIs).

"The initial investment will come from the Government to prepare the best possible socio-economic environment.

"The private sector will follow suit with commercial investments," he said when launching the NCER at the Muda Area Development Authority (Mada) headquarters here yesterday.

Abdullah said the Government would invest RM5bil to implement programmes in the initial stages.

"We are revising programmes in 9th Malaysia Plan and putting in additional allocation during the half-term review of 9MP.

"We will look into improving the infrastructure including irrigation systems and roads to facilitate transfer of goods from farm to factories," he said.

He said that the Government would also offer incentives to small entrepreneurs who were of calibre.



**Team spirit:** (From left) Sime Darby Bhd chief executive Datuk Seri Ahmad Zubir Murshid, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Effendi Norwawi, Shahidan, Mahdzir, Abdullah, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajol Rosli Ghazali linking arms to show their commitment to the NCER initiative in Alor Star yesterday.

"Apart from fiscal incentives, the Government will also give grants, pioneer capital and easy loans," he said.

Abdullah said an implementation and co-ordinating body for the NCER was in the process of being set up.

"The incentive packages are being finalised and will be announced in the near future," he added.

With the commitment of five parties - the state governments of the

four states in the NCER and the Federal Government - the prime minister was confident that the four states could be transformed into the "four stars" of the region.

"Four states, one region, one glorious goal," he said.

Abdullah noted that the poverty rate in Kedah and Perlis was higher than other states.

"Household income is also lower compared with the national average.

"That is why the aim of NCER is community socio-economic transformation, whereas the Iskandar Development Region (in Johor) is based on urban development," he said.

Abdullah added that the northern corridor would be developed as a hub for the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle and it would create one million jobs by 2018.