

## **PM launches National Biotechnology Policy 2.0 [NSTTV]**

By Nuradzimmah Daim - September 12, 2022 @ 4:54pm

The newly-launched National Biotechnology Policy (DBN) 2.0 will steer industry in Malaysia to achieve high-technology nation status by 2030.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the policy would focus on agriculture and food security, healthcare and wellbeing, as well as industrial and circular economy.

"This will ensure the field is developed further, in line with the country's aspirations to be a high-tech country by 2030.

"In line with the focus on agriculture biotechnology and food security, the government will step up efforts in sustainable usage of the local natural resources for agriculture input, livestock and marine produce, as well as high-value aquaculture," he said in his speech at the launch of DBN 2.0.

He said the future food ecosystem and high-value products by using latest technologies would be developed, including superfoods and sustainable food products.

Ismail Sabri said biotechnology played an important role in the country's healthcare security in managing communicable and non-communicable diseases.

He said the policy would strengthen the existing biotech ecosystem and be the catalyst in addressing the country's challenges related to food security, pandemic management and climate change crisis through local biotech solutions.

In driving growth of the industry, Ismail Sabri urged active participation from the Malaysian Bioeconomy Development Corporation Sdn Bhd to enhance the Bionexus Bill of Guarantees; National Institutes of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIBM) to strengthen research and development (R&D) facilities and services; local venture capital companies and government-linked companies (GLCs) to support the biotech industry's growth and explore global market; and commercial banks to ease financing for local biotech companies.

He said DBN 2.0 outlined five main targets, namely having 30 per cent of Bionexus companies penetrate global market and 70 per cent domestically; supporting Bionexus companies with potential to achieve unicorn status with three companies to achieve it by 2030; empowering institutes and institutions, as well as local researchers to become world-class; reaching five per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product from biotech companies; and, having 80 per cent of biotech graduates recognised through micro accreditation programmes and 20 per cent in post-degree programmes.

The prime minister also announced the establishment of the Malaysia Biotechnology Alliance of Research Centre involving biotechnology-based (biotech) institutions and research institutes.

He said an advisory board of biotech experts would be created through the alliance to drive the country's agenda.

It would involve a more focused effort and based on the country's strength such biodiversity would empower the three sectors stated in DBN 2.0.

Ismail Sabri also announced a RM5 million fund for the Bio-based Accelerator (BBA) programme to boost development of local companies in the biotechnology industry.

He said the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) recently held a consultation and had requested for the allocation to encourage the growth of local companies in the biotech industry through BBA conducted by Bioeconomy Corporation.

"This is significant considering Mosti has a conducive ecosystem to support the development of biotech industry for the wellbeing of the Malaysian Family.

"I hope BioMalaysia will be successfully held in 2023 and attract more industry players, as well as local and foreign investors."

Earlier, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba, in his speech, said the policy would see initiatives to support local biotech companies expanded to health and industry, apart from agriculture biotech stated in the first policy introduced in 2005.

He said it was found that 61 percent of biotech graduates in 2019 and 2020 were working in unrelated sectors.

He said it was due to lack of inter-agencies coordination, with the ministry willing to work with the Higher Education Ministry, Human Resources Ministry and the International Trade and Industry Ministry to address the issue.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said an advisory board of biotech experts would also be created through the alliance to drive the country's agenda in the sector. - NSTP/MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI