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Putrajaya to extend services of vaccine researchers at Malaysian universities, says PM

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (second from right) launches the National Vaccine Development Roadmap and Malaysian Genome and Vaccine Institute in Bangi November 1, 2021. — Bernama pic

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BANGI, Nov 1 — The government has agreed to automatically extend the services of experts involved in vaccine research in universities with a five-year contract when they reach the retirement age of 60, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

He said this decision takes immediate effect to ensure that the relevant experts who are still carrying out research related to vaccines, especially those involving subjects marketable in the international market, can continue and complete their research.

“So there is no longer any question of feeling insecure in the aspect of the work they are conducting; so they can continue for five years and after that we will see if there is a need to extend it further.

“This is on condition that the research and development (R&D) they are undertaking can be commercialised and marketed throughout the world,” he told a press conference after launching the National Vaccine Development Roadmap (PPVN) and Malaysian Genome and Vaccine Institute (MGVI) here today.

Also present were Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin and Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba.

Ismail Sabri said the government is doing this to retain the talent of many internationally recognised Malaysian experts who might be enticed by other countries when they reach retirement.

“If (services) not extended, it will affect their research and if (research) continued by new experts, it may take time,” he said.

Asked on the number of researchers who will benefit from the government's decision, he said the data would be obtained from the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) and Higher Education Ministry.

On the development of the head and neck cancer vaccine by the Cancer Research Centre, Ismail Sabri said Malaysia is the first country involved in this undertaking.

“We are capable of offering our own vaccines and that is why the government upgraded the Malaysian Genome Institute into the Malaysian Genome and Vaccine Institute,” he said.

PPVN and MGVI were launched in an effort to turn the country into a hub for vaccine production and boost confidence in vaccine use. — Bernama