

## From knowledge to earnings

By Dhesegaan Bala Krishnan - November 29, 2021 @ 9:40am



Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba (third from left) and Technology Park Malaysia (TPM) group chief executive officer Dzuleira Abu Bakar at the pre-launch of Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation at TPM recently.

THE Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (MRANTI) has been tasked with spearheading the country's efforts to fast-track the commercialisation of innovative ideas.

The new agency, formed through a merger between the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MaGIC) and Technology Park Malaysia (TPM), will focus on delivering Return on Ideas and driving "Ideas to Impact".

At the recent launch of MRANTI, Science Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba explained that the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) regulates various agencies that are able to drive the entire technology value chain in delivering important functions.

He said MRANTI was in line with the strategy under the policy catalyst to develop future workforce.

It was also in line with the government's strategy to accelerate the adoption of technology and innovation as outlined in the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP).

TPM group chief executive officer Dzuleira Abu Bakar said MRANTI sought to inspire the world with a bold new model to accelerate technology and innovation to commercialisation.



We are guided by our 'Ideas to Impact' roadmap to help researchers, innovators and enterprises maximise their Return on Ideas at a quicker rate, with enhanced scalability and optimised synergies."Dzuleira Abu BakarTPM group chief executive officer  
"Just like meranti, the world's tallest tropical tree, MRANTI will fast-track Malaysia's innovation ecosystem to stand strong and tall amongst the world's best.

"The conventional concept of ROI refers to Return on Investment, which conveys fiscal yields from capital outlays.

"However, MRANTI will focus on Return on Ideas, which refers to the conversion of knowledge to fiscal earnings," she said.

MRANTI will serve as a one-stop agency with the resources to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative ideas and concepts.

"MRANTI's mandate is to take the ecosystem forward. It's not about one company or 10, but the aim is to unlock value across the entire value chain.

"We are guided by our 'Ideas to Impact' roadmap to help researchers, innovators and enterprises maximise their Return on Ideas at a quicker rate, with enhanced scalability and optimised synergies."

MRANTI, she said, would connect problem statements (demand) with solutions (supply) and bridge collaborations between public and private sectors.

The agency aims to increase private sector participation, either through market access, investment, advisory or consultation and facilities for testing and prototyping.

Dzuleira said MRANTI would act as a key agency to realise the second policy enabler under the 12th Malaysia Plan, namely, accelerating technology adoption and innovation.

She also stressed that having an agency such as MRANTI that focuses on commercialisation was vital since commercially-viable solutions often comprise a mix of technologies.

"Hence, it is crucial that we have an agency to foster an ecosystem, which encourages integration of various technologies rather than having solutions developed in silos.

"With comprehensive facilities and an enabling ecosystem, we are confident we can attract higher investments, especially via the public-private partnership model," she said.

MRANTI will be supporting several R&D related targets including ensuring the country's gross expenditure on research and development accounts for 2.5 per cent of the national gross domestic product.

MRANTI, she said, would also strive to contribute to the commercialisation of 500 products and solutions through the National Technology and Innovation Sandbox (NTIS) and Malaysia Commercialisation Year.

Dzuleira said the agency also aspired to place Malaysia among the top 20 positions in the Global Innovation Index.

"In setting up MRANTI, we studied the models practised in other countries, such as Agency for Science, Technology and Research in Singapore and Innovate UK in the United Kingdom, as well as several technology parks in the region. We will be adopting some of our key learnings from the research.

"Of course, it would not be viable, unwise even, to replicate those models wholesale in Malaysia, as we have to consider many factors in our local landscape.

"We are in that transformation process as we look into the strengths and weaknesses that our local ecosystem and infrastructure has," she said

Dzuleira said MRANTI would also promote commercialisation from "grassroots to market" through a programme that comprises NTIS, Global Innovation Exchange, International Innovation Hub, as well as collaboration between the community, universities and entrepreneurs.

"Through these (initiatives), we seek to not just increase the depth and quality of our intellectual property bank, but also train intellectual property valuers as well as register our intellectual properties globally.

"Technopreneurs will also have access to infrastructure support, coaching and mentoring as well as a platform to conduct pilot tests."

Under Dzuleira's stewardship, TPM is the only 4th generation incubator service provider in Malaysia with physical incubators and tech infrastructure, while MaGIC has

played an important role in cultivating technology startups and innovation ecosystems with a wide range of interventions ranging from capacity building to social innovation.

"MRANTI will link the web of partnerships within and outside the ecosystem to catalyse the technology and innovation agenda. We have a lot to do!" said Dzuleira.

In recognising this, the government, in the recently-announced Budget 2022, allocated RM423 million for both Mosti and the Ministry of Higher Education for the acceleration of R&D activities, and another RM30 million to implement TPM's International Innovation Hub, which amongst others will offer early prototyping and tech immersion programs through TPM's maker space and the newly-launched Area 57 - a Centre of Excellence for Unmanned Autonomous Vehicles (UAV).

The hub, she said, aims to impact 5,000 technopreneurs and develop 15 intellectual properties in 2022.

Dzuleira said TPM was also set to host the country's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) park.

The park, she said, would serve as a platform for the development of AI solutions in areas of computer vision, speech recognition, natural language and human or robots.

"Ultimately, the park will enable the development of technology and talent, data management, research and development and commercial ecosystem, which could assist the government to address the data ecosystem and AI governance," she said.

Apart from the AI Park, Dzuleira said TPM had dedicated a 2.02-hectare land bank to establish a Drone Development Zone to conduct drone flying, testing, research and development activities.

"We are in active discussion with several partners and will finalise plans for these parks soon. Then, we will seek approval from the government," she added.

Professor Datin Dr Teo Soo-Hwang from Cancer Research Malaysia said "Funds for Malaysian scientists to work on mission-based research was a critical factor to ensure successful collaborations"

The country, she added, should invest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics ) education and capitalise the entrepreneurial spirit of Malaysians as well as the strengths of our small and medium enterprises to generate an innovation-led economy.