



PRESS RELEASE

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

IA-DATA ANNOUNCES INITIATIVES TO DELIVER AFFORDABLE DIAGNOSTICS AND THERAPEUTICS, REVOLUTIONISING HEALTHCARE ACCESS IN MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur, December 5, 2023 – The International Affordable Diagnostics and Therapeutics Alliance (IA-DATA) unveiled groundbreaking initiatives to transform healthcare access in Malaysia at the International Conference on Drug Discovery and Translational Medicine 2023 (ICDDTM'23).

The announcement was made by YB Tuan Chang Lih Kang, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), marking a significant step towards addressing global health challenges, including infections, cancers and non-communicable diseases.

During the minister's speech, Chang emphasised the importance of the National Biotechnology Policy 2.0 (DBN 2.0) which was launched in September 2022 to strengthen Malaysia's biotechnology ecosystem. The policy focuses on three key areas: agricultural biotechnology and food security, healthcare biotechnology and wellbeing, as well as industrial biotechnology and circular economy.

DBN 2.0 aims to transform Malaysia into a technological development country by 2030 and has set targets to maintain a global presence for biotechnology companies, empower research institutes, drive economic contribution, foster talent recognition and encourage bio-innovation. DBN2.0 also aims to create wealth opportunities through biotechnology-related emerging industries contributing to 5% of Malaysia's GDP by 2030," said Chang.

He added that the initiative also reflects the Ministry's National Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy 2021-2030 which envisions Malaysia's transformation into a knowledge-centric economy through several key science, technology and innovation initiatives.

IA-DATA is committed to fostering collaboration and innovation to address the critical gaps in affordable diagnostic tests and treatments. With a primary focus on Low and Middle-Income countries, particularly within the ASEAN region and nations associated with the Islamic Development Bank, IA-DATA aims to ensure equitable access to healthcare solutions.

Strategic Pillars of IA-DATA

The alliance is built upon three strategic pillars namely developing affordable point-of-care diagnostics, exploring drug repurposing for existing medications and advancing molecular pharming for cancer immunotherapies and diagnostics.

Collaboration at the Heart of Innovation

IA-DATA champions a multi-stakeholder approach, fostering collaboration among government bodies, industry leaders, academic institutions and civil society organisations.

The operational framework includes collaborative research and development projects, shared infrastructure, technology platforms, data sharing and knowledge exchange to accelerate discoveries and streamline processes.

Ensuring affordability is a priority, and IA-DATA will adopt pricing strategies that prioritise accessibility, especially in developing countries. The alliance is dedicated to implementing differential pricing models and improving access to essential medicines in underserved regions.

Among IA-DATA's Initial Pilot Projects for 2024 include:

1. Technology Transfer of Dengue Test Kit:

IA-DATA will facilitate the technology transfer of a highly accurate dengue test kit developed by Global Access Diagnostics (GADx) in the United Kingdom. The test kit, designed for point-of-care use, will be refined and manufactured in Malaysia, particularly benefiting rural areas such as Sabah and Sarawak.

2. Drug Repurposing Studies:

IA-DATA is conducting two drug repurposing studies using an antimalarial drug, artesunate, for potential cancer treatment. Collaborating with University Malaya, these studies aim to explore artesunate's effectiveness in treating cervical intraepithelial 2/3 and Stage 2/3 colorectal cancer.

3. Plant Molecular Pharming Program:

IA-DATA will initiate a multi-stakeholder engagement and capacity-building program for Plant Molecular Pharming, with partners such as University of Malaya, St George's University of London, Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (MRANTI) and BoomGrow. This innovative technology aims to significantly reduce costs for cancer immunotherapy and targeted therapies.

Strengthening Malaysia's Healthcare Ecosystem

In alignment with IA-DATA's goals, MRANTI and the Centre for Affordable Diagnostics and Therapeutics (CADT) are set to sign a Collaboration Agreement at ICDDTM'23. This collaboration focuses on enhancing Malaysia's landscape for affordable diagnostics and therapeutics, leveraging the expertise of both organisations.

IA-DATA is also looking at collaborating with key academic partners, government-linked agencies and industrial partners to tailor individual project agreements, ensuring a comprehensive and impactful approach to affordable healthcare solutions.

For more details visit <http://mranti.my/>

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Mr Safuan Zairi, Chief Ecosystem Development Officer of MRANTI and Professor Sanjeev Krishna, Director, Centre for Affordable Diagnostics and Therapeutics Limited during the Collaboration Agreement exchange at the launch of IA-DATA initiative.



YB Tuan Chang Lih Kang (second from right) during the launch of IA-DATA initiative at The Mines Beach Resort, today.

About MRANTI:

MRANTI serves as a connector, incubator and catalyst to enable early-stage ideation to mature entities to commercialise and scale. MRANTI offers innovators and industry access to world-class integrated infrastructure, programmes, services, facilities and a suite of resources. In doing so, MRANTI aims to expand Malaysia's funnel of innovation supply, and unlock new R&D value by ensuring effective transitions in the commercialisation lifecycle. It will also link academia with industry and the public sector to streamline market-driven R&D efforts for mission-based outcomes.

MRANTI is headquartered at MRANTI Park, an extensive 686 acre 4IR innovation hub in Kuala Lumpur, supporting the growth of smart manufacturing, biotech, agritech, smart city, green tech and enabling technology clusters.

For more information, please visit <http://mranti.my/>

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About MACR:

MACR is committed to fostering cancer research in Malaysia, as well as to promoting the dissemination of latest research discoveries among scientists, healthcare professionals, and related stakeholders.

About CADT:

The Centre for Affordable Diagnostics and Therapeutics, based in the United Kingdom, is a not-for-shareholder-profit social enterprise. CADT plays a pivotal role in connecting international academic and industrial partners with the Malaysian ecosystem, accelerating growth and innovation in diagnostics and therapeutics.