

# MTDC, LKM tie up to increase commercialisation



Datuk Norhalim giving a token of appreciation to Datuk Tan Yew Chong during the launching ceremony

BY SYAHIRAH HUDA ABDUL RAHMAN

**SERDANG:** Just last year, the cocoa industry alone had reportedly contributed RM55.5 billion in Malaysia's export revenue. However, despite the growing number of researchers that are being done in the country, there is a discrepancy between the solutions needed by the industries and what can be offered by researchers, especially from the public sector.

With the aim of increasing the commercialisation rate of research and development (R&D) of Malaysian Cocoa Board (LKM), the "Innovation to Market (I2M)" programme kickstarted its first module of a workshop from July 15 to July 18.

The four-day programme is the first series of seven that will deliver knowledge and skills of technology transfer and commercialisation to the researchers of LKM – a programme co-organised with the Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC).



Beutecoa, the cosmetic products based cocoa

The programme was launched officially by Datuk Dr Tan Yew Chong, Secretary-General of Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI). He was accompanied by Datuk Norhalim Yunus, Chief Executive Officer of MTDC, and Dr Ramle Kasin, Deputy Director (Operation) of Malaysian Cocoa Board (LKM). The launch was held at the MTDC Technopreneur Training Academy (TENTRA) in UPM-MTDC Technology Centre.

Tan said with the right business model as well as commercialisation and downstream activities, cocoa has great potential for the export market. Nevertheless, he said, cooperation is still needed with the relevant agencies for research and development (R&D) as well as commercialisation to make it globally competitive.



The Innovation to Market (I2M) Workshop for LKM researchers by TENTRA

Assessing technology readiness of LKM's technologies, assisting LKM to develop a suitable framework for bringing its technologies to the market as well as equipping the researchers with a comprehensive understanding of technology transfer and commercialisation are the main objectives of the I2M programme.

To achieve these goals, MTDC via TENTRA has been engaged by LKM as its strategic partner to promote the commercialisation rate of its R&D. Being the first in the country to have been given a mandate to promote technology adoption by local companies, MTDC believes that one of the means to realise the objectives is connecting the R&D community with the industry to overcome the barrier between researchers and the industry.

In his opening speech, Norhalim said: "The researchers attending the I2M programme will gain insightful information and knowledge from the training rendered by TENTRA as it will be used to improve their commercialisation rate in R&D."

"The outcome at the end of the six month's programme will include creating competent researchers on technology transfer and commercialisation with the aim of creating 20-30 technologies from LKM to be successfully commercialised."

"MTDC is proud to be the strategic partner to LKM as we believe with our structured programmes, we can assist the researchers to develop commercial and market-ready R&D," he added.

Since the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP), LKM has carried

out a total of 89 R&D projects and the effort to promote the commercialisation of their R&D products has begun since 2014. LKM boasts 19 products and technologies that are currently in the market with the commercialisation rate of about ten percent. Sixty-three other potential products have also been identified, including cosmetics, personal care products, food, beverage, healthcare, disease control, and crop management.

The biopesticides that received the silver medal at the International Invention, Innovation and Technology Exhibition (ITEX) 2017 with *Beauveria bassiana* as the active ingredients is one such product. The product is effective against the cocoa pod borers.

In addition, LKM has developed clone variety, such as the Malaysian Cocoa Board Clones (MCBC) which are resistant to pests and diseases. The clones have a vast potential in improving cocoa bean quality and providing more options for growers.

Norhalim also said a lot of successfully commercialised products which are already out in the market commenced with hard sciences and purely academic researches.

"There is a misunderstanding in the concept of commercial-driven products – one fact is that you cannot run away from hard sciences. You must understand the real science behind the to-be innovation and do both hard sciences and the applications."

"If you do not understand the science behind it, you cannot develop varieties. So, it does not mean that a pure

research product will never be commercialised. It depends on the market development and the components that are associated with it," he said.

With the strategic partnership, MTDC and LKM aim to increase the percentage of successful technology transfer and commercialisation of LKM research products. This collaboration sees the first milestone of many that are yet to come as this is just the beginning of the effort in promoting the nation's technology development and commercialisation.

**"MTDC is proud to be the strategic partner to LKM as we believe with our structured programmes, we can assist the researchers to develop commercial and market-ready R&D,"**

Brought to you by



Malaysian Technology Development Corporation Sdn. Bhd.

Ground Floor, Menara Yayasan Tun Razak, Jalan Bukit Bintang, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Follow us @MTDCMALAYSIA



+603-2172 6000

+603-2163 7541

tentra@mtdc.com.my

mtdc.com.my/tentra