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# Govt, private sector boost for Sabah's agri sector

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Sabah state government agencies have teamed up with private sector companies to boost and strengthen the state's agriculture industry under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation's (MOSTI) agricultural technology development programme.

MOSTI, via its agencies, yesterday signed five partnership agreements with Sabah state government for technology development, innovation and research programmes in agriculture and its related industries in Sabah.

Also present were Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Yahya Hussin and Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili.

Yahya, who is also the State Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry, said agriculture, the backbone of the state's economy, contributed 30 per cent of the state's gross domestic product and offered 33 per cent of the jobs.

"Sabah offers vast opportunities and resources as it is the second largest state in Malaysia with a total land area of 73,610 sq km, suitable

for agriculture and related industries," he told reporters after the agreement signing ceremony here yesterday.

Yahya said RM81 million was allocated for Sabah in terms of research and development funds during the period of 7th Malaysia Plan to 9th Malaysia Plan.

The first partnership was between Mimos Bhd, a MOSTI agency, and Sabah Agriculture Department (JPS) for a development programme on Precision Agriculture Farming.

Under the partnership, JPS will be the technology recipient of the Wireless Sensor Network (WSN) developed by Mimos together with Universiti Putra Malaysia, Kontron Design Manufacturing Services Sdn Bhd and Intel Technology Sdn Bhd. The Agriculture Research Centre in Tuaran, Sabah has been identified for the pilot project for the WSN technology for precision agriculture.

Upon completion of the pilot project, a commercial entity will commercialise the WSN technology in Sabah as well as other parts of Malaysia.

The WSN has been acknowl-

edged by Pemandu Electrical and Electronics under the National Key Economic Areas as a potential new source of growth for the nation.

Under the second partnership, Mimos will provide its semantic technology to develop a knowledge management platform for Sabah Development Authority's Herbal Medicine Knowledge Repository Project.

The third collaboration, between All Cosmos Industries Sdn Bhd and Sabah Softwoods Bhd, was to set up a RM50 million bio-organic fertiliser manufacturing plant in Lahad Datu.

Two tripartite memoranda of agreement were also exchanged between National Agribiotechnology Institute (ABI), JPS and Pure Circle Sdn Bhd, an international bionexus company.

The other agreement was between ABI, Pure Circle and Koperasi Pembangunan Desa Sabah.

Both agreements were to develop the stevia planting industry in Sabah, both in low and high land.

- Bernama