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KUALA LUMPUR: The main responsibility of Sirim Bhd, the Malaysian standards body, will now be to help develop products using local technologies, said the Government.

Sirim will guide universities in the country as they develop world-class products from technologies that they have learnt, said Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation.

He said the change will take place soon.

Mimos Bhd, the country's applied-research body, is tasked with helping Sirim with its new responsibility.

"Mimos will find out what products the information technology industry needs and Sirim's job will then be to help the universities develop these products," said Jamaluddin.

Sirim, he said, has done a good job of making sure products adhere to standards but it can do more by helping out in product development.

"What we need now is to learn how to apply the technologies and turn them into usable products," he said.

He said this is needed to help sustain the country's economy in the age of science and technology.

Jamaluddin said that if a university is found to be strong in one area (of expertise) and wishes to use that technology for a product, it will then be given a grant to create a prototype that will be presented to venture capitalists.

Sirim's job, he added, would also be easier now that there are venture capitalists under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

"This will make it easier to overcome the risks involved in coming out with a new product," he said.

Jamaluddin was speaking at a signing ceremony between Mimos and 13 local universities early last week. The parties agreed to collaborate their research on a number of technologies. — **JO TIMBUONG**