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# Mimos moves ICT up value chain



DATO' ADBUL WAHAB ABDULLAH

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**DATO' Abdul Wahab Abdullah, a pioneer in the setting up of Motorola Malaysia's R&D Centre in Penang, has brought an invaluable leadership experience in this field to the Malaysian Institute of Micro-electric System (Mimos).**

The first Malaysian assigned to lead this organisation in 1993, he was responsible for Mimos' R&D Department that has a comprehensive set of capabilities — from conceptual stage, industrial design and development to testing, final manufacture and packaging of products.

Before joining Mimos, Abdul Wahab was senior director of research & development operations, global technology development group in Motorola Technology Sdn Bhd.

He has notable industry experience from developing many major global portable and mobile radio development projects for Motorola.

This University of Malaya graduate joined the company in 2006 as its president and chief executive officer and since then, Malaysia's own applied research centre in frontier technologies has advanced by leaps and bounds to what it is today, a force to be reckoned with in the field of IT.

**Q: What is Mimos and what does it do?**

**A:** Mimos is the national premier applied research centre in frontier

technologies, a strategic agency under the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, entrusted with transforming the landscape of the country's indigenous industries.

Mimos' applied research technology areas are refined into six technology clusters — grid computing, knowledge technology, information security, wireless communications, microsystems & MEMS and advanced informatics.

Its focus is on promoting and licensing Mimos technologies or intellectual properties (IPs) to qualified indigenous ICT companies to strengthen their abilities for competing globally and moving Malaysian ICT industry higher up the

value chain.

**Q: Mimos then and now — what's the difference?**

**A:** Mimos marked the start of a new journey in July 2006 following my appointment as its president and CEO, and a corporate restructuring exercise focused on people (capability development) and technology development (realignment of Mimos applied research areas).

**Q: What do you see for the company 10 years from now?**

**A:** The ultimate aim is to drive technology from a tool to an enabler and subsequently as a sector. Towards this end, Mimos' applied research efforts are focused on developing technology platforms on which local industries can build products for the world market in our efforts to help move

Malaysia's ICT industry higher up the value chain and shift the economic needle.

Mimos' role is essentially to transfer or license the technology platforms to Malaysian companies to further develop these technologies into products and applications to serve the global market needs.

**Q: Do you see the possibility of Malaysia — through Mimos — getting on par with technology giants like the US, Germany and**

**Japan?**

**A:** We are adamant Malaysia has the potential to stand among the giants. The Knowledge GRID Malaysia, a Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry initiative, with Mimos heading its technical committee, is now part of the European Grid Network infrastructure

envelope on IPs to ensure they are recognised for applied research.

IPs are crucial if Malaysia is to be recognised as the inventor of technology, not just a user. This is not the issue of IP protection but one of not enough IPs being generated by the research communities.

For all developed nations, IPs are what differentiate them. Marketable IPs from research will result in royalties for researchers and as such, the focus at Mimos is on encouraging our researchers to turn their ideas and novelties into IPs that will give Mimos a competitive edge.

**Q: Malaysians have the tendency to believe in imported**

**technology? What can Mimos do to convince locals its products are just as good, if not better?**

**A:** Our robust technology platforms provide local companies that are our technology recipients with a speedy *time-to-market* and *price* elasticity to position themselves globally. With the IPs Mimos has generated, we will also be able to reposition Malaysia's indigenous industries in niche markets globally.

This means without having to invest in research that has a long gestation period and high market uncertainty, the local industries are able to focus on building the brand and the marketing channels.

**Q: Currently, where does Malaysia stand in the field of applied research globally?**

**A:** Malaysia through Mimos is a member of a number of world standard committees — the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) Standards Working Group for Quantum Information; the Technical Committee Group for Cryptography Standards (Mimos representing Malaysia); the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Semantic Technology International (STI).

**Q: You started the internal IP Reward Scheme. Has it been effective? If so, how?**

**A:** Mimos introduced this Scheme in July 2006, a first for the organisation, to ensure that Malaysia is recognised for applied research and not just development. IP generation is now a key performance indicator (KPI) for all Mimos employees.

The collective effort within Mimos is to see an explosion of innovation and invention in frontier technologies, in line with the government's aim to take the country to new heights of science and technology innovation.

Mimos' collective target is for all its employees,

cutting across all levels of the organisation, to have at least one patent disclosure accepted by the IP Committee every year.

For commercialised patents, the recipient stands to receive a royalty on all the novelties that have translated in a workable platform for the industry to develop their applications and solutions.

Before July 2006, Mimos had filed only two patents. To date, there are more than 595 patent disclosures and the filing of 191 patents. Our IP progression as at Q1 2009 ending March 30 is:

- 16 patent disclosures approved by IP Committee.

- 26 patents filed locally.

- Two industrial design patents filed locally.

- 10 IPs filed internationally.

Mimos has the highest number of IPs filed at the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia and recently won awards at the National IP Award 2009. They were:

- National Intellectual Property (NIP) Award 2009 — Trademark category for Knowledge Grid Malaysia.

- National Intellectual Property (NIP) Award 2009 — Industrial Design category for WiWi Access Point.

The target is to have 1,000 patents by 2011.

**Q: As the CEO, what are your aspirations for Mimos?**

**A:** The ultimate aim is to drive technology from a tool to an enabler and subsequently as a sector.