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TRIPARTITE INITIATIVE: Kong (second from right) addressing the media at the Mimos Technology Forum. With him (from left) is Husni, Badlisham and Abdul Wahab.

THREE SPEARHEAD BRAIN GAIN EFFORT

By **JO TIMBUONG**

KUALA LUMPUR: Three government agencies will now work together to ensure Malaysian technological research will be commercialised to the world.

Venture capitalist Malaysia Venture Capital (Mavcap), applied research company Mimos Bhd, and custodian of the MSC Malaysia initiative, the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC), will team-up to encourage more technological commercialisation.

The move is the latest effort to woo Malaysian technology experts back to the country via the National Brain Gain programme.

This programme is part of the Ninth Malaysia Plan and seeks to attract Malaysian scientists and engineers worldwide to carry out R&D activities in Malaysia.

Under the programme, the Government targets 50 scientists and engineers for every 10,000 people in the workforce.

The tripartite initiative is a complete commercialisation eco-system that includes technology transfer, funding and government support.

"This is an attraction for these experts — the funding is covered by Mavcap; Mimos is pushing the technology and; MDeC and Mosti (Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation) are providing the support," said Datuk Badlisham Ghazali, MDeC chief executive officer.

He said the initiative will lead to

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DATUK BADLISHAM GHAZALI,
MDEC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

wealth creation for Malaysians, which would encourage these experts to come home.

"During our trade missions overseas, we would ask these experts why they don't come back and they would answer 'if we did, what's there for us?'" he said.

Badlisham said that because Malaysians are building on foreign technology, they receive little profit from their work.

Currently, he said, Malaysians can only claim about 10% of the profit out of every foreign technology that they build their solutions on.

"With Mosti and Mimos engaging the industry with new technologies, that profit portion should increase to 100%," he said.

With this in place, Badlisham said, Malaysians could better compete internationally because they would already own the technology and would only need to customise to suit a targeted industry.

Malaysians could also control the price point of the technology, as well as work with other people to further develop it, he said.

"We couldn't do these things before because the intellectual property belonged to someone else and we had to ask permission to customise it to our advantage," said Badlisham.

Mimos CEO Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah agreed that the tripartite initiative would result in an attractive environment for Malaysian experts abroad to conduct R&D in the country. "However, bringing them in is not enough. We need to excite them into becoming technology leaders as well," he said.

From the venture capitalist angle, Mavcap CEO Husni Salleh said, the move could lower the risk of investing in a new venture.

"Risk is something we would rather do without, so by working with Mimos the risk is minimised and we can make sure that there is enough funding for the researchers to build their businesses," he said.

Badlisham, Abdul Wahab and Husni were speaking at a press conference after the opening of the Mimos Technology Forum here last week. Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Kong Cho Ha officiated at the forum.