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MIMOS RISES TO THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE

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KUALA LUMPUR: Applied research body Mimos Bhd's 25th birthday wish is to increase the number of Malaysian researchers and to take locally bred technology to the world stage.

Its president and chief executive officer, Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah, said that increasing the number of Malaysian researchers is crucial if the nation aspires to be a net exporter of IT products and services.

"We're playing catch-up right now with our counterparts in leading R&D countries such as Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea," he said at a press conference during Mimos' birthday celebrations.

Mimos has 400 researchers, which is a small number compared to that of Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, which have 5,000, 6,000 and 2,433 researchers, respectively.

Abdul Wahab hopes to have 1,000 researchers at Mimos by 2015.

To this end, he said, Mimos will work with Talent Corp Sdn Bhd — an agency under the Prime Minister's Department — to help retain the country's world-class talent, swell the number of Malaysian researchers, and work with Malaysian researchers in other countries.

"I don't think it's a good idea to bring them back here. Sometimes the local ecosystem may not be conducive to the technologies they are studying. It's best to leave them

where they are and tap their knowledge," he said.

Abdul Wahab said Mimos has already contacted several Malaysian

researchers residing overseas and they are happy with Mimos' arrangement because they believe the ecosystems where they are now are more suitable.

"Bringing people back (to Malaysia) is the old way of doing things. With our arrangement we are in a good position to tap their knowledge and perhaps also look for market access for our R&D projects," he said.

Recognition

Mimos chairman Datuk Suriah Abdul Rahman said this model is being used by other leading R&D countries, such as Taiwan.

When Abdul Wahab took the helm in the 2006, he drove Mimos to focus on R&D in nine key areas — Advanced Informatics, Advanced Information Security, Advanced Analysis and Modelling, Green Technology, Grid Computing, Knowledge Technology, Micro Systems & MEMS, Nano Electronics, and Wireless Communications.

By increasing the number of Malaysian researchers, Abdul Wahab said Mimos could bring better technologies to the global arena.

"We want our technologies to be used by international companies and we are also pushing our local players who are equipped with technologies from our labs, out to the global market," he said.

Mimos is also investing heavily in

intellectual property (IP) and will protect its ideas, as well as better preparing itself to face global competition.

Last year, Mimos contributed 40.4% to Malaysia's Total Filed Patent Applications. As of early this year, it has filed 365 patents.

During its birthday celebration, Mimos presented the National ICT Leadership Award to former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tengku Datuk Dr Azzman Shariffadeen, the founder of Mimos.

In 1984, Tengku Azzman presented a concept paper on the need for the establishment of an R&D centre for microelectronics, to leapfrog the country into the Information Age.

Dr Mahathir accepted the idea and in 1985, Mimos (then known as the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronics Systems) was established as a laboratory under the Prime Minister's Department. It was corporatised in 1996 as a company under the Ministry of Finance.

»We're playing catch-up right now with our counterparts in leading R&D countries«

DATUK ABDUL WAHAB ABDULLAH, MIMOS PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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THANK YOU: Dr Mahathir receiving the book *Innovation For Life, A Journey Beyond Future* from Suriah at Mimos' 25th anniversary celebrations. Applauding is Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili.