



Abang Johari (front, right) seen during the meeting at Mini Isthmus in Gedong. — Photo from Sarawak Public Communications Unit

# ‘Padi planters able to earn more via smart farming’

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**KUCHING:** The income of the padi farmers in Sarawak could reach up to RM6,000 per month if they were to shift to smart farming, said Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg.

The Gedong assemblyman said the hybrid seedlings, currently being developed in Lubok Punggor, could yield five harvests within two years, which would give farmers additional income of 60 per cent, based on a study conducted by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) on a pilot project.

“I had been briefed by the UPM on the outcome of the study, where I asked them to conduct a study on a new method for planting rice by using modern technology to increase the income of our farmers,” he said during a press conference yesterday, held after a site visit to Lubok Punggor and the Mini Isthmus in Gedong.

Adding on, the Premier cited the pilot project in Lubok Punggor as an example of a public-private partnership with agriculture cooperatives, which had allowed padi farmers to experience the impact of technology via rental of equipment from these cooperatives.”

Abang Johari also said the state government had allocated RM30 million slated for improvement works on the existing drainage at Lubok Punggor.

“We can calculate the cost for other areas,” he added.

Abang Johari said if proved successful, the model for Lubok Punggor could be used as a framework for the state government to come up with constructive agricultural policies.

“If they (farmers) could earn RM6,000 a month, then it means that they are already in middle-income category, and not in the poverty list anymore,” said the Premier.