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ECER shows Pahang the way in biotechnology

KUANTAN: The East Coast Economic Region (ECER) master plan has drawn a clear blueprint on the development of biotechnology and biodiversity for Pahang, said State Science, Innovation, Information and Information Technology Committee chairman Datuk Mohd Sharkar Shamsuddin.

The focus would be on research and development activities through biotechnology to produce new products with the right quality and added value, he added.

"The main focus will be on developing three scopes - agro, healthcare and industrial biotechnology," Mohd Sharkar said recently.

In agro biotechnology, the emphasis would be on developing the herbal industry and one of the projects given approval was a herbal park in Lanchang, he added.

Felda Herb Corporation would manage the park and its core activity would be research and development to make herbal products, he said.

Another herbal project would be implemented at Jubli Perak agricultural park in Kuantan, to be run by Pahang Technology Resources Sdn Bhd, he added.

Mohd Sharkar also said with the development of the herbal industry, opportunities could be created for the alternative medical industry to flourish.

Alternative herbal treatment was

getting popular among the people nowadays, he added.

"In view of the kind of potential the industry may generate, the state government and Pahang Technology

Resources Sdn Bhd organised a seminar on alternative treatment in July last year.

"It was a platform for traditional and modern medical practitioners,

researchers and entrepreneurs to share their views, experience and knowledge," Mohd Sharkar said.

On industrial biotechnology, Mohd Sharkar said the state government had received a sum of RM1mil from the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry to fund research and development work to process the *haruan* fish as a medical product.

The project was being headed by Universiti Putra Malaysia's Prof Dr Abdul Manan Mat Jais, he added.

The State Financial Office had also agreed in principle to set aside RM200,000 to build an office and laboratory at Jubli Perak agriculture park in Kuantan, he said.

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DATUK MOHD SHARKAR SHAMSUDDIN