

Saturday, 26 November 2016

# NEW MILESTONE FOR ANTI-HIV DRUG

The Star

**KUCHING:** The Calanolide A project, a clinical research programme on the development of the anti-HIV compound derived from the Bintangor tree, has made significant progress.

Science Research and Biotechnology Assistant Minister Dr Annuar Rapae said Craun Research, which managed the project for Sarawak, had made several pre-clinical studies, improved clinical product and filed for a product patent.

The new patent would extend market protection for the compound, Calanolide A, from 2014 (the original US patent expiry date) to 2030 (patent managed by Craun Research).

“Phase 1a and 1b of the clinical trials using the improved product were successfully conducted in Penang and Kuching, respectively. Phase 1a is a single ascending dose on healthy subjects while Phase 1b is multiple ascending dose on healthy subjects.

“With these promising results in hand, Craun has prepared a paper to update the state cabinet and to request for funds to appoint a consultant to conduct market intelligence and out-licensing exercises for this anti-HIV drug,” he said in response to a question from Dr Hazland Abang Hipni (BN-Demak Laut) at the state legislative assembly sitting here.

On a different note, Dr Annuar said Sarawak’s strategies and directions in its science research and biotechnology fell in line with the National Biotech Policy that was launched in 2005 as well as the state’s own Sarawak Socio-economic Transformation Plan.

The state is also planning to establish a body – the Sarawak Research Council – to spearhead organisation and management of research and development and coordinate research activities for Sarawak.

The development of biotechnology and bio industry in the state is further aided by universities offering undergraduate and post graduate studies to carry out scientific research, namely Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Curtin University, Swinburne University of Technology and University College of Technology Sarawak.