

# TRY OUT INNOVATIONS BEFORE MARKETING THEM, VARSITIES TOLD

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*Dr Abu Bakar examines a product at one of the exhibition booths. — Photo by Jeffery Mostapa*

KOTA SAMARAHAN: Universities are urged to expose their product innovations beyond university level before they commercialise them.

Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah suggested that universities use their own innovations first before promoting them.

The country's innovation culture is expanding but it was worrying that most of creations could not go to the next level to penetrate the international markets.

“We have no problem inventing products at the levels of primary and secondary schools and universities but most of them cannot go to the next level, which is not the work of universities as it is for private companies to commercialise them.

“So I urge universities to expose their products outside to commercialise them,” he told reporters after closing the ‘Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) Innovation and Technology Exposition (InTEX16)’ yesterday.

Mosti funded a total of 6,483 projects which included 4,566 projects under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP), 1,872 projects under the 10MP and 45 projects under 11MP (January to March this year).

Out of the total, 4,661 projects had been completed while the rest were still in progress.

“In research, Mosti spent RM2,896 billion in the 9MP, RM998 million in the 10MP and RM8.7 million in the 11MP from January to March this year,” he added.

He said at his ministry level, they were ever ready to give funding such as through Science Fund, Inno Fund, Tetechno Fund, and Research and Development Fund.

To ensure research and development products are able to compete and penetrate international markets, the prime minister declared this year 'Malaysia Commercialisation Year' in the hope that 360 products giving the highest impact could be commercialised and marketed internationally by year 2020.

The Malaysia Commercialisation Year 2016 is jointly organised by Mosti and the Finance Ministry.

A total of 240 researchers of private and public higher learning institutions took part in the expo.

Thirty-four gold awards were given to participants taking part in the categories of Technology and Engineering, Pure and Applied Science, Social Science and Humanities, and Information and Communication Technology.

Deputy vice-chancellor (research and innovation) Professor Dr Kopli Bujang said Unimas saw 80 per cent increase in participation in this year's expo compared to last year.

"This is positive and encouraging to our effort to cultivate the research and innovation culture among our lecturers and students.

"The products that have won awards in InTEX 2016 will have the potential to represent Unimas in similar expos, nationally and internationally," he said.