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Tajuk : Sarawak Being Eye As A Viable Hub For Scientific And Technological Projects.

## Sarawak being eyed as a viable hub for scientific and technological projects

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**KOTA SAMARAHAN:** Sarawak has the potential to become a major contributor to science and technology in the country because of its rich biodiversity and natural resources.

For this reason, the state has become one of the locations where the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry is focusing on for the implementation of its programmes, minister Datuk Dr Ewon Ebin said.

"One area we have identified is renewable energy. For instance, the

ministry funded the installation of a lighting system using solar energy and wind turbines at the Kuching Waterfront and in Tanjung Manis.

"This project aimed to introduce the use of renewable energy for street lamps and lighting in parks," he said when opening a dialogue session with grant applicants and recipients at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) here yesterday.

Ewon said the ministry was also supporting bioeconomy projects which had potential to be developed in the state.

He said six projects had been

identified for implementation this year, which are high-value extraction from fruits and flowers, pre-germinated rice, bio-fertilizer from palm oil mills, bio-plastic manufacturing, integrated pineapple and sago farming as well as a project to turn agricultural waste into compost-based products.

"If these projects are fully implemented, they are expected to generate RM887.4mil in gross national income by 2020," he said.

He also said the ministry provided funding and grants for research, development and commercialisation

(RD&C) activities by small and medium enterprises, research institutions and higher learning institutions in various fields of science and technology.

Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9MP) period (2006-2010), 4,474 projects were approved under the ministry's RD&C funds, of which 3,452 have been completed while the rest are in various stages of implementation.

In addition, 313 projects were successfully commercialised, resulting in 14,320 job opportunities created.

Ewon said the ministry was con-

tinuing its efforts to fund RD&C activities by allocating RM660mil through seven funding schemes under the Third Rolling Plan of the 10MP.

The schemes include the Science Fund, Pre-Commercialisation Fund, Commercialisation of Research and Development Fund and Technology Acquisition Fund.

As of Aug 31 this year, 1,168 projects with a total funding of RM474.35mil have been approved.

For Sarawak, he said 95 projects worth RM44.14mil were approved under the 9MP and 15 more worth RM2.32mil under the 10MP.