

Stem cell facility set to make RM1b revenue

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A STEM cell facility in Pahang, which may be the world's biggest, is due to make over RM1 billion in turnover when it starts commercial operation in 2011.

To be built on 80ha of land in Janda Baik, the facility will produce stem cells from rabbits to treat various diseases.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said the bulk of the revenue would come from stem cell transplant services while the rest would be from the sale of fertiliser and rabbit meat.

"The facility would supply stem cells to doctors and hospitals around the world.

"This project involves a massive investment but it will generate lucrative returns," he told a news conference after the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Pahang Technology

Resources Sdn Bhd (PTR) and BCRO Stem Cell Xenotransplantation Sdn Bhd (BCRO Malaysia) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Under the deal, Malaysia will be the hub for rabbit colony for stem cell culture and production for medical purposes.

BCRO Malaysia has been appointed by US-based Bio-Cellular Research Organisation LCC to transfer the latest stem cell transplant technology to Malaysia.

Adnan expects PTR and BCRO Malaysia to sign an agreement to establish a joint venture company within a month from the MoU.

PTR, wholly owned by the Pahang state government, will provide the land while BCRO Malaysia will develop the facility and supply the expertise.

He said 20ha of the land will be used for rabbit rearing; eight ha for laboratories, manufacturing, storage and cooling-chain facilities; and four ha to house the scientists, experts and

staff. The remaining 48ha is reserved for future expansion.

Adnan said initially, about 90 people would be employed by the facility, but the manpower would be expanded to over 200 people at a later stage.

Janda Baik was chosen due to its topography, temperature and source of unpolluted water supply.

The rabbits have to multiply to at least 25 generations before they are able to produce stem cells. This would take three years.

According to Adnan, BCRO has been treating and implementing stem cell transplants to over 300 patients in Malaysia for the past three years.

BCRO stem cell transplant has been used to treat various types of diseases that are not treatable with modern medicine.

These include genetic diseases, ageing diseases, diabetes complications, cardiovascular diseases, immune system diseases, liver diseases, skin disease and cancer.