

TARIKH	3 NOVEMBER 2025 (ISNIN)	SURATKHABAR	BH / UM / NST / TS / HM / KOSMO
TAJUK ARTIKEL	FROM INNOVATION TO IMPACT		
M/S	13 (NATION)	KATA KUNCI	MINISTRY OF SCIENCE,
BIDANG	MOSTI	TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, INNOVATION	

THE STAR, MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2025

FROM INNOVATION TO IMPACT

Mosti is using Budget 2026 to advance its 'From Lab to Livelihood' agenda as a catalyst for national economic growth and innovation



Chang (front right) and the Brazilian Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Luciana Santos (front left) during the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) exchange in STI between Malaysia and Brazilian government, as well as the agencies within both governments. Witnessing the occasion are Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (back row, right) and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (back row, left) in Kuala Lumpur recently.



Chang said every ringgit invested in innovation must deliver measurable outcomes.

MALAYSIA'S Budget 2026 has earmarked significant investments across high-impact areas in science and technology to boost national capability and efficiency.

The Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) is leveraging these allocations to drive economic growth, enhance global competitiveness and improve Malaysians' quality of life. Minister Chang Lih Kang shared the ministry's aspirations with The Star.

Setting success metrics

Over the next 12 to 24 months, Chang revealed that Mosti aims to translate more home-grown research into market-ready products and services.

He explained that the key success metrics include:

- > Commercialisation and market entries through the National Technology and Innovation Sandbox (NTIS), Malaysia Commercialisation Year (MCY) and Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation (MRANTI), tracked by products launched, licences signed, first sales and exports.
- To date, MCY has enabled over 474 commercialised innovations worth RM540ml, while NTIS recorded 27 products commercialised in 2023.
- > Follow-on funding rates showing investor confidence and readiness to scale.
- > Technology transfer outcomes such as licensing and pilot deployments from Mosti agencies to industry and communities. "These KPIs support Malaysia's efforts to improve its Global Innovation Index ranking (currently 34th) by building a stronger, more connected innovation ecosystem," he said.
- To accelerate commercialisation, Mosti is:
- > Bridging investor-readiness and follow-on funding programmes.
- > Through programmes such as NTIS testbeds to ease regulatory bottlenecks and speed market entry.
- > Strengthening Intellectual Property (IP) coordination between Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) and MRANTI under the IP Commercialisation Policy (2021–2025).
- > Expanding access to showcases and deal rooms like the National Innovation and Commercialisation Expo (NICE) and MCY to connect innovators with investors and buyers.
- Empowering startup ecosystem and high-tech industries, support includes:
- > Shared testing and prototyping facilities under MRANTI and NTIS.
- > Matching grants, training and R&D partnerships to help them adopt and apply new technologies.

Cradle Fund – RM55ml including Cradle Elevate equity programme (RM10ml), CIP Spark (RM8ml), CIP Sprint (RM8ml), BIG 2.0 (RM15ml), Accelerator and Reinnovate (RM13.3ml)

VentureTECH – RM105ml to boost bumiputera equity ownership in high-tech companies

Mimos Bhd – RM7ml to develop blockchain and AI-powered deepfake detection technologies.

Ultimately, the goal is clear: every ringgit invested in R&D must generate tangible commercial outcomes, empower startup

reach initiatives, ensuring nationwide exposure to science and innovation opportunities.

"Third, Mosti actively tracks income uplift among participants who adopt social innovation projects, turning the 'lab to livelihood' vision into tangible community impact," he explained.

Integrated delivery

Mosti's coordination with other ministries operates on two key levels to ensure a cohesive national approach to STI commercialisation and skills development.

- > Policy coordination through the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (DSTIN) action plan – The DSTIN 2021–2030 provides the overarching framework, with annual milestones tracked by Mosti. Its implementation is inherently cross-ministerial, aligning education pipelines, workforce upskilling and sectoral technology adoption through collaboration with other ministries. Oversight and alignment are further supported by the National Science Council, which ensures policy coherence at the national level.
- > Delivery coordination through joint programmes and problem-solution matching – Under Programme 2, Mosti works directly with partner ministries to link public-sector expertise with industry needs and to co-deliver nationwide initiatives such as the Malaysia Techlympics and Minggu Sains Negara.

These platforms bridge education, community engagement and technology commercialisation, turning policy into practical, on-the-ground outcomes.

"Through this dual-layer approach, Mosti ensures that Malaysia's innovation, education and skills ecosystems move in sync toward a shared goal of creating a resilient, knowledge-based economy," he added.

Outcome orientation

Under Budget 2026, the most significant change lies in the focus of R&D funding.

"About 60% of Mosti's R&D allocation now supports downstream, outcome-driven activities, up from about 45% in 2025. This shift ensures that the value of research is measured not by how much is published, but by how much it reaches people," he explained.

Key programmes driving this shift include NTIS, which enables innovators and startups to test solutions for real-world challenges – from precision farming to clean energy; MCY, which transforms research results into viable products and start-ups; BIG, in partnership with the Finance Ministry, which links GLCs to adopt local innovations that improve services and reduce costs; and MySTI, which strengthens R&D coordination, transparency and impact tracking.

Through these initiatives, every ringgit invested in innovation is tied to measurable outcomes – improved healthcare, climate resilience, SME productivity and high-skilled job creation, he concluded.

duplication and strengthen public-private collaboration.

"Mosti is also strengthening the local innovation chain through initiatives such as BIG (Bengkel Inovasi GLC), developed with the Finance Ministry, which helps government-linked companies (GLCs) and government-linked investment companies (GLICs) identify, adopt and scale up homegrown technologies, creating demand for Malaysian innovators."

At the grassroots level, STI enculturation programmes like Malaysia Techlympics 2025 aim to reach 1.7 million youth, nurturing innovation literacy and inspiring the next generation of technologists and entrepreneurs.

Ultimately, Malaysia's rise in the Global Innovation Index must go hand-in-hand with inclusive, measurable outcomes, from jobs and technology adoption to income uplift, he added.

Assessing impact

Chang highlighted that the Ministry is not only focused on technological breakthroughs, but also on ensuring that innovation delivers real and meaningful benefits to the people. Mosti's R&D investments are constantly evaluated to ensure they lead to stronger local industries, greater technology adoption and more homegrown solutions entering the market.

He added that success is ultimately measured by outcomes that matter to Malaysians – better jobs, higher incomes and improved quality of life. This includes tracking how innovation fuels business growth, accelerates technology transfer and supports communities through social innovation programmes. "Every ringgit invested in STI must contribute to a more inclusive and resilient future. That is the core of the MADANI economy," he stressed.

Equitable distribution

Mosti is committed to ensuring that the benefits of this "new engine of our economy" are shared equitably across all states, including rural and less-developed regions.

"First, funding for STI outreach of RM15.3ml under the Pembudayaan STI programme, expanding statewide roadshows and community partnerships beyond urban centres.

"Second, Pusat Sains Negara has been mandated to extend programmes to rural and interior areas through mobile and out-

nation's innovation-driven future."

Green technology

In Budget 2026, Malaysia has positioned green technology, renewable energy and decarbonisation alongside semiconductors, AI and digital transformation as core national priorities.

To advance this agenda, the government has allocated RM1bil for the next phase of the Green Technology Financing Scheme (GTFS 5.0), alongside plans to introduce a carbon tax – starting with the iron, steel and energy sectors – under the national energy transition framework.

Under the Technology and Innovation pillar, Mosti will lead R&D and commercialisation in clean energy, smart grids, circular economy solutions and sustainable biotechnology, working with agencies such as NanoMalaysia, Mimos and the Malaysian Green Technology Corporation.

"Mosti's focus extends beyond developing green innovations. It aims to build sustainable industries, skilled employment and resilient energy systems that translate innovation from lab to livelihood, driving Malaysia's long-term sustainability goals," he pointed out.

Inclusive growth

Mosti's drive for global competitiveness is balanced with domestic resilience by ensuring every science, technology and innovation (STI) initiative delivers tangible benefits to Malaysians.

Under Budget 2026, key performance indicators (KPIs) measure not just exports or recognition, but also high-skilled job creation, technology adoption and income growth at home.

Programmes like MCY and Program Pengunaan Barangan dan Perkhidmatan Hasil R&D Tempatan (MySTI) reflect this dual focus. MCY accelerates the commercialisation of publicly funded research into market-ready products and high-value jobs, while MySTI coordinates national R&D efforts to prevent

ecosystem and create better opportunities for Malaysians.

Talent empowerment

Talent development is at the heart of Mosti's mission to position Malaysia as a creator, not merely a consumer, of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).

Budget 2026 reinforces this vision by nurturing an innovation talent pipeline that extends from early exposure to industry application.

Through MyStartup, tech entrepreneurs receive structured upskilling, mentorship and market engagement, developing founders and teams with both technical and business acumen to scale regionally.

NTIS supports small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by providing shared test beds, advisory services and regulatory sandboxes, enabling real-world experimentation and accelerating technical capability among local engineers and innovators.

At MRANTI, end-to-end "Ideas-to-Impact" support – spanning prototyping, market-readiness, and funding facilitation – helps innovators transform prototypes into market-ready products.

"Mosti agencies such as Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic Systems Berhad (Mimos), NanoMalaysia, National Institute of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIBM), Bioeconomy Corporation, Cradle and Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC) continue to develop specialised talent in frontier sectors like semiconductors, biotechnology, hydrogen and nanotechnology," he highlighted.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Techlympics 2025, targeting 1.7 million youth, nurtures the next generation of innovators through exposure, internships and entrepreneurship opportunities linked to Mosti-led projects.

Together, these initiatives lower barriers to innovation, expand access to expertise and connect Malaysian talent to global markets, ensuring more Malaysians actively shape the

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