

## Press Clipping

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# Details by December for Northern Corridor

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Northern Corridor Economic Region project is coming along smoothly, with a bill to form its implementation authority set to go before parliament in December.

Sime Darby Berhad group chief executive Datuk Seri Ahmad Zubir Murshid said consultants had been engaged to provide detailed plans for each of the four key sectors in the northern corridor — agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and human capital.

"When we launched the NCER in late August, we made public the blueprint that outlined the general principles, target areas and some benchmarks. Now, the consultants are working on detailed strategies for each sector, and taking into account feedback we have received," he told some 100 senior federal and state government officials at an implementation and action plan meeting here yesterday.

The consultants are Rabobank for agriculture; KPMG for tourism and the Boston Consulting Group for manufacturing and human capital.

These companies will complete their detailed reports on each sector by December.

The NCER was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on July 30.

The long-term plan covers Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang and northern Perak, and is aimed at unleashing the economic potential of the north and elevating its income level.

The plan involves turning the north into Malaysia's modern food production zone, manufacturing hub and a world-class tourism destination.

Abdullah has also named Bernama chairman Datuk Mohd Annuar Zaini as his special adviser for NCER. Annuar's functions

would include co-ordinating efforts towards the establishment of an implementing agency and monitoring of relevant activities that would be carried out in stages in the northern corridor.

His appointment took effect on Aug 30, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said yesterday.

Annuar has vast experience in both the public and private sectors.

He was the Perak Economic Planning Unit's assistant director-general between 1991 and 1993.

He is a distinguished fellow with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies and a member of the board of advisers to the Public Complaints Bureau in the Prime Minister's Department.

Sime Darby has been given the task of master planning the NCER. The job of implementing the project will be in the hands of the

Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA).

Ahmad Zubir said the process of setting up the NCIA was moving along well and it is expected to be established early next year.

"Let me assure you that the groundwork to build up the capacity of the NCIA has already started. By December, a full team would have been recruited for the implementation authority.

"This means that when the NCIA is set up, everyone can hit the ground running," he said.

Once the NCIA has been set up, Sime Darby will hand over the NCER project to the authority and will revert to being an investor.

To date, Sime Darby has identified several projects in the Northern Corridor which it will spearhead. These include the US\$10 million (RM35 million) Seed Academy in Perlis and the Premier Industrial Park in Kedah.