

## 50 SMEs to be picked for biomass project

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The Biomass Industries in Malaysia Sustainable Production (Biomass-SP) project will identify 50 local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to participate in the commercialisation of biomass technology with their counterparts in the European Union (EU) in two years.

Biomass-SP chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Zaharudin Idrus said only SMEs with proper track records, which show a great potential for commercialisation will be picked, groomed and given access to the relevant grants, soft loans and venture capitals.

"In two years, we plan to bring 50 EU companies here to explore the technology and have business matching with the local firms," he told a press conference at the EU-Malaysia Biomass Stakeholders Forum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Biomass-SP project is sponsored by the EU with a total allocation of RM9 million for the next four years.

At present, Malaysia is producing a minimum of 168 million tonnes of biomass products like timber and oil palm waste; rice husks; coconut trunk fibres; municipal waste and sugar cane waste.

Earlier, in his speech, Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Fadillah Yusof said that Malaysia wants to become a net energy importer by 2020.

He said the ministry has taken the necessary steps to develop a renewable energy technology in five focused areas such as biomass, solar, wind, micro-hydro and tidal power.

"The use of renewable energy plays an increasing role in meeting the requirements of our energy security and the effects of climate change due to the greenhouse gas emission," he said.

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