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# Shaanxi to set up global halal hub

BY HO WAH FOON



Working together: Hamidon receiving a halal certification proposal during the Shaanxi business-matching event.

XIAN (China): China's Yangling Demonstration Zone in Shaanxi province, a national level agro-science industrial area, is planning to set up a global halal park to lure overseas producers so as to capture a slice of the world's US\$2.3tril (RM9.28tril) halal market.

It will also consider setting up a Malaysia halal park if there is strong interest from Malaysian companies.

For the development of the halal park, it is proposing that Malaysia's Halal Development Corporation Sdn Bhd (HDC) render help and set up a halal certification unit in Yangling, an education town 80km west of ancient city Xian.

"We are planning a global halal park for the processing of Muslim food and products.

"We welcome Malaysian companies to be investors.

"There will be generous incentives and negotiable taxation terms," deputy director of the Administrative Committee of Yangling Demonstration Zone Liu Qing told a visiting business delegation from Malaysia on Saturday.

The 23-member Malaysian delegation, led by Lawrence Low, political secretary of Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, is on a 11-day visit to two provinces in China to explore business opportunities in halal and SME sectors.

The first leg covered during the visit is Shaanxi province, in the Northwest region.

On Friday, general manager of HDC Hamidon Hamzah was presented with a proposal from Shaanxi to set up halal certification unit in Yangling during an opening ceremony of a grand global SME business matching event that saw over 1,000 SMEs from China seeking business partners from overseas.

Liu said that because Shaanxi had a huge Muslim population and Yangling was situated along the old "Silk Road" trade route with easy access to the Middle East, it was best suited for the setting up of a halal park in order to capture domestic and Central Asia markets.

In addressing the meeting, Low said Malaysia's halal certification was recognised globally due to stringent conditions imposed.

He urged Yangling to work closely with Kuala Lumpur on the halal park so that there was closer Malaysia-China cooperation.

"Many foreign companies want to partner with Malaysian firms because of halal certification. China can also invest in Malaysia.

"The latest example is Japan, partnering with our Lay Hong Group," he said.

He said food security would be assured once Chinese products obtained Malaysian halal certification since it's requirements were known to demand high standards.

"Even non-Muslims in China may want to consume Malaysian certified food.

"This will increase your market potential," he said.

Hamidon told Yangling officials HDC was keen to help companies in China convert into halal players to widen their market appeal.

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