

New Industrial Master Plan 2030: Prioritise Common Diseases — Ahmad Mahfuz Gazali

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It is imperative to encourage more companies to manufacture minimally invasive devices, point-of-care products, and medical devices to support the NIMP.



Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim recently launched the [New Industrial Master Plan \(NIMP\) 2030](#) on September 1, 2023.

The NIMP will require an estimated investment of RM95 billion over the course of seven years to propel Malaysia's economic growth.

The Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) formulated the plan with several priority sectors, namely aerospace, chemicals, electrical and electronics, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices.

Other sectors such as food processing, metals, minerals, and others will also be developed, despite not being priority sectors.

Let us focus on pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

One of the missions of the NIMP is to advance economic complexity by encouraging high-growth industries to innovate and produce more sophisticated products, eventually enhancing Malaysia's competitiveness in the global market.

To achieve this, there is a need to identify high value-added opportunities in the aerospace, pharmaceutical, and medical device sectors.

Most importantly, the key growth segments of each sector must be identified.

The manufacturing of biologics, active pharmaceutical ingredients, and the manufacturing of niche botanicals and halal medicines are key growth segments in the pharmaceutical sector.

At the same time, minimally invasive devices, point-of-care products, and medical devices from the convergence of technologies are also included as key growth segments in the medical device sector.

Furthermore, MITI, the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Malaysian Investment Development Agency (MIDA), and the Medical Device Authority (MDA) must work together to create a supportive ecosystem to cater to the industry's needs, foster collaboration and knowledge sharing among industry players, and facilitate the industry's product development, including research and development, testing, and standards compliance.

Despite a comprehensive strategy covering the pharmaceutical and medical device sectors, no particular focus has been given to communicable or non-communicable diseases.

So, the question is, which disease should we focus on in the NIMP? We should focus on developing something that could benefit our local population.

For a start, maybe we can focus on hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) and dengue as communicable diseases, as both diseases are endemic to our country.

Furthermore, nasopharyngeal cancer (NPC) can be an area of focus on non-communicable diseases as Malaysia has recorded the second highest incidence rate among the Chinese population after Hong Kong.

After identifying several diseases common to our population, such as HFMD, dengue, and NPC, we can start by creating point-of-care diagnostic kits.

Point-of-care testing is essential for rapidly detecting analytes near the patient, facilitating better disease diagnosis, monitoring, and management.

The best example is the Covid-19 self-test kit that individuals at home can make use of.

A closer look at the [MDA](#) website has revealed that only two local companies out of 23 have been granted conditional approval to manufacture Covid-19 test kits.

Given that significantly few local companies are involved in such industries, it is imperative to encourage more to manufacture minimally invasive devices, point-of-care products, and medical devices to support the NIMP.

And the best way to start is by focusing on common diseases in Malaysia.

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[medical devices](#) [pharmaceutical industry](#)