

KERATAN AKHBAR

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ECERDC eyes RM14 bil committed investment, RM7 bil realised investment this year



KUANTAN (Feb 1): The East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) aims to attract RM14 billion in committed investments and RM7 billion in realised investments for the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) this year.

Chief executive officer Datuk Baidzawi Che Mat said the target could be achieved through the tax incentives announced by the government, as well as the continued momentum of investment inflows that was achieved last year.

"Last year's encouraging performance reflects investor confidence in Malaysia and we are confident that the year 2022 (with the relaxation of movement restrictions) would make it even easier on investors. They could move anywhere.

"We are confident that the RM14 billion target can be achieved. With the high level of determination and commitment to promote the region, we can rest assured that investors will have confidence in the region," he told Bernama recently.

In 2021, ECERDC managed to garner committed investments worth RM13.4 billion for ECER, exceeding its initial target of RM12 billion, and realised investments of RM4.7 billion amid Covid-19 and Movement Control Order (MCO).

Commenting on the projected inflow ratio, Baidzawi said ECERDC aims to achieve a 50:50 ratio between foreign direct investment (FDI) and domestic direct investment (DDI) for 2022.

"For now, foreign investors cannot come (to Malaysia due to cross-border constraints) but it does not stop us, as we have been conducting promotions through webinars and so on. So, we are confident of getting more FDI in 2022," he said.

ECER has been an attractive investment destination for companies from China, Japan, Europe, South Korea, India, and the Middle East.

Baidzawi said ECERDC was capitalising on the special tax incentives extended until end-2022 to promote ECER as an investment destination to restore its investment momentum.

Besides, he said the investment inflow target under the ECER 2.0 Master Plan (EMP 2.0), which was implemented since 2018, became an ECERDC benchmark to ensure quality investment inflows into the region.

Under EMP 2.0, ECERDC has set the target of achieving private investment of RM70 billion by 2025, of which RM50 billion is for the manufacturing sector, RM15 billion for the tourism sector, RM3 billion for the oil and gas and petrochemical sectors, and RM2 billion for the agriculture sector.

"Our focus is quality investments that can generate better-paying jobs. At ECERDC, we have an industrial park that is ready to receive investors, hence, promotions will be easier with this approach," he said.

He said the EMP 2.0 target seemed most likely to be achievable, especially with the infrastructure projects being implemented to improve connectivity in the ECER region such as the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) and Central Spine Road (CSR).

Baidzawi said so far, ECERDC has attracted investments worth RM27.7 billion.

ECERDC is a statutory body established to spearhead the execution and implementation of the ECER Master Plan. The ECER region covers Terengganu, Kelantan, Pahang, and the Mersing district of Johor.