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# Herbal industry needs funds

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THE INDUSTRY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO GENERATE AN INCOME OF UP TO RM2.2 BILLION A YEAR BY 2020. WE HAVE ALL THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE, RESOURCES AND MANPOWER ... ALL WE NEED IS THE FUNDING. ”

— Dr Rasadah Mat Ali

*Forest Research Institute of Malaysia's Natural Products Division director*

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Despite the growing popularity of herbal remedies and products, the nation's industry still suffers from a lack of funds for research and development.

Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) Natural Products Division director Dr Rasadah Mat Ali said developing a product could cost between RM500,000 and RM4 million as it involves numerous stages.

“Developing a product is not easy as it involves detailed research, pre-clinical studies and clinical studies.

“Though numerous private companies approach us to help develop products, they do not provide us the needed funding.

“They expect us to do the research for free, which cannot be done. We need funding as research and development is a very expensive process.”

Rasadah was responding to reports yesterday that there were about 6,000 species of herbs in Malaysia that could be developed and used as beauty and food supplement products.

According to the report, FRIM had studied more than 20 species of

medicinal and aromatic plants from which beauty care and fragrance products could be developed.

Rasadah said it would be a loss to the nation if FRIM was unable to maximise the vast potential which could be tapped from these herbs, merely due to the lack of funding.

She said though there were government funds available, these were insufficient and FRIM could not depend solely on this.

Rasadah said the private sector must assist the industry and create a win-win situation for all.

“The industry has the potential to generate an income of up to RM2.2 billion a year by 2020.

“We have all the necessary expertise, resources and manpower ... all we need is the funding.”

