

Texchem's Acumen Scientific eyes Thailand, Vietnam

Written by Regina Williams

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GEORGE TOWN: Within 14 months of its operations, Texchem Resources Bhd subsidiary Acumen Scientific Sdn Bhd is planning to expand its one-stop analysis solutions services to Thailand and Vietnam by 2011.

Texchem CEO and president Jeffrey Lee said the expansion would be fit in with Texchem's current operations in these countries, as Acumen could easily set up laboratory facilities there and tap into the markets.

He said Acumen, which recorded more than RM500,000 in profit on the back of RM2.8 million in turnover in 2009, anticipates a 50% increase in turnover and profits this year.

Initially operating from a 3,200 sq ft laboratory, it recently expanded to 8,000 sq ft and Lee said it would have to expand further. Lee said Acumen has reached the maximum capacity and it increase the capacity to 16,000 sq ft soon.

"Though 90% of our business is derived locally, we also have customers from Japan and Singapore as it is cheaper for them to outsource it to us in Malaysia," Lee said at the official opening of the Acumen plant in Prai. Also present were Texchem chairman Tan Sri Fumihiko Konishi and Acumen managing director Ridzuan Ismail.

Acumen's Klang Valley offices are to cater for industries there while its Johor Baru facilities serve those in Singapore.

Lee said there were plans for a central region laboratory later this year in the Klang Valley.

"The investment would depend on the services offered which may duplicate what we have in Prai," he said.

Konishi said the initial capital investment for Acumen was RM10 million over five years but this would be insufficient, even by next year, as its expansion plan picks up.

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Ridzuan said Acumen's investment in equipment would focus on implementing the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemical (REACH) certification for products to be shipped to the European Union. REACH is an EU regulation for chemicals.

"We have the capabilities to test up to 70% of the products. It is a huge potential and market for Acumen," he added.

Its customers include electronic companies and also food processing industries in Penang.

Acumen offers analytical testing and consultancy services in environment, chemistry, microbiology including food testing and green product testing.