UMS first to receive 200 electric bicycles

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) was the first among six universities in the country to receive 200 new Sikal Elektrik Rakayat Malaysia (Serma) electric bicycles here Tuesday.

The other universities are Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas).

According to Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili the programme aims to promote green technologies through urban practices to young people, especially among university students.

"The Ministry has appointed Malaysia Green Technology Corporation (MGTC) as the implementing agency for this programme based on the experience of the agency in the electric vehicle initiative in Malaysia.

The Electric Pedal Assisted Bicycle (EPAB), which is used for the programme complies with the MS 2514 standard of technical and engineering efficiency and so on to promote a green lifestyle."

He also said the programme can also move on to other aspects of reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) from 40 per cent to 45 per cent based on the national gross domestic product by 2030 compared to the levels in 2005. He added that 35 per cent was unconditional while the remaining 10 per cent was conditional and dependant on the receipt of financial allocations technologically and capacity building from developed countries.

On the total cost for the programme Ongkili said the Serma programme received a RM3m allocation from Finance Ministry for the programme where six universities were chosen including UMS at a cost of RM64,800.

For Sabah and Sarawak there will be additional cost incurred for transportation and logistics.

"The most important thing is the awareness among the people and students of higher learning institutions. So our hope is the universities will use it as a platform to create further awareness among the campus community and they can move on to other aspects of reducing energy i.e. energy efficiency, water efficiency and so on to promote a green lifestyle."

He added that there was also scope from a technical and engineering cooperation (of the university) for further improvement (of the Serma) with the manufacturer.

Ongkili said the university can also carry out the programme according to a business model under the entrepreneur ship programme. The bikes can be rented or sold to students according to their business plan.

Another model is the one used in Jeju Island in South Korea, where the electric bicycles are traded by a company under the university and students there purchase a card to utilise the electric bicycles where they park in another part of the city. It is all monitored so this is where this model needs to be coupled with IT applications (to make it work)."

To a question on whether the bikes which cost about RM3,000 each would be released to the market soon, Ongkili said the programme at the moment was still in the pilot stage to gauge the response and success before rolling it out to the public.

On charging the bike, he added that it was a simple affair which can be done at any home electrical outlet for a few hours and that the next model coming out next year is also expected to have ‘charge as you cycle’ capabilities.

Earlier Ongkili also presented an allocation grant of RM55,000 to UMS for its energy audit programme for commercial buildings.