



JOHOR - MALAYSIA

Blessed with a unique geographic location and friendly investment policies, the most Southern Malaysian State is the jewel of Southeast Asia



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JOHOR'S SECRET RECIPE FOR FDI

ITS STRATEGIC LOCATION AND OPENNESS TO FDI MAKES JOHOR THE TRUE JEWEL OF SOUTHEAST ASIA



One of Malaysia's most important states economically, Johor is a clear leader in attracting overseas investment amongst the country's 13 states and for good reason. Its GDP accounts for around 10 per cent of Malaysia's total, there is a wide range of vibrant and growing industrial sectors and the state government works very hard at being business friendly.

"Johor in Arabic means jewel so that when you come to Johor you are actually coming to the 'Jewel of Malaysia," says Jimmy Puah Wee Tse, the state executive council's Chairman of International Trade, Investment and Utilities.

"And there is reason why we are the 'Jewel of Malaysia' because all the best people, all the best talent and all the best of everything is right here."

Indeed, Johor is blessed with two coasts allowing easy access to international trade, is right next door to regional business and banking hub Singapore and enjoys a highly-skilled and highly-regarded workforce, all factors which have made it a natural destination for foreign investment.

Singapore, naturally enough, leads the list of overseas investors, followed by the United States, Japan, the Netherlands and China, while other major foreign investment comes from the United Kingdom, Germany and South Korea.

"The fact that we have two coastlines, one facing west and the other facing east, puts us in a unique geographical position which is so important to our logistics sector," he explains.

"Geography plays another vital role in that Singapore is our neighbour and that is a big draw for Chinese businesspeople as they want to be close to Singapore but operate in a less expensive environment."

"Also, Johor has always been very liberal when it comes to trade and investment, and the state contains one of five special economic zones in the country created by the fe-



JIMMY PUAH
WEE TSE

CHAIRMAN
INTERNATIONAL
TRADE & INVEST.

JOHOR STATE
EXEC. COUNCIL

"JOHOR'S UNIQUE GEOGRAPHIC POSITION IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE LOGISTICS SECTOR"

deral government and the most successful – Iskandar Malaysia – is right here," Puah says.

Federal support has also been remarkable in the ploughing of millions and millions of dollars into Johor's infrastructure which is another key reason why it attracts such a high level of premium foreign investment.

And these investors have a wide range of industries to put their money into.

"First of all, Johor has always been very strong in petrochemicals which is our leading selling point and the state oil company Petronas has its huge Pengerang integrated petroleum complex here," the chairman says.

"Manufacturing is also one of our strengths and we have companies here like Bahru Stainless and Dyson, while plastics is another subsector which is highly successful in Johor."

Now the government is interested in attracting more high-tech investment in such industries as aerospace, MRO and block chain operations, as well as such endeavours as halal food processing for the many millions of Muslim consumers worldwide, and promoting start-ups.

"In fact, we like to sum up our new focus as 'the 3-H Principal' which is high value, high tech and halal," Puah explains.

The chairman emphasizes that all these efforts at luring foreign investment should

adhere to what the federal government calls the "share prosperity concept" which means investment should trickle down to the people.

"We must make sure that the local people also benefit. For example, if a high-tech company opens here it must do technology transfer so the local sub-contractor can upscale its operations as well.

"In addition, local workers should receive priority in hiring as the wages stay in the community and contribute to economic growth. So we're no longer aiming for the quantity of investment but rather the quality of investment," he says.

The chairman is pro-active in promoting Johor abroad, especially in Europe where he says the state as an investment destination is not as well-known as it is in the US and China.

"And that is what we have to be more engaged in. I've travelled to France twice over the past two years and I'll soon be visiting Spain and Portugal. We want to diversify our investors so there is a variety of countries interested in Johor," he explains.

"But it is important that potential investors come themselves to take a look and see what we have to offer, what a wonderful place Johor is to do business."

Right Location

One company which is very happy it made the choice to do just that is Bahru Stainless SDN BHD, a subsidiary of Acerinox S.A. of Spain, one of the world's leading steel makers with manufacturing facilities in Europe, the United States and South Africa.

"We made a decision back in 2008 that we wanted to have a manufacturing presence in Asia," recalls CEO Mark E. Davis. "Several countries were considered but after a thorough feasibility study Malaysia was picked because of a number of advantages.

"There was well-developed infrastructure,



**INTERVIEW WITH MR LAU T. H.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FAR EAST PYRAMID**

This electronics R&D company has designed a series of innovative products that protect the health of users and helps reduce plastic waste. Already operating in Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan it plans to expand its reach to Europe, America and Japan to take its unique products for their discerning consumers



What were you trying to achieve when you founded Far East Pyramid?

L.T.H. - Since its foundation in 2008, the idea behind the company has always been to make the life of electronics consumers easier and healthier. We discovered very soon that the young generation, specially in Asia, are avid users of electronic devices, such as mobile phones and tablets, even at a very young age. So we set out to find a solution to the excessive exposure to electromagnetic radiation for both young and adult users in Malaysia and in other Asian countries.

Since I had been working for Panasonic before I founded this company, I had a first-hand experience on how the youngsters and children in Asia are more exposed, for cultural reasons, than Europeans or Americans.

“WE FOUND THAT HOSPITALS IN MALAYSIA ARE RECEPTIVE TO POWERLINK TECHNOLOGY”

For instance, my own niece who is only five years old asks for the WiFi password even before he asks for ang pow in the Chinese holidays, and in hotels nowadays you will be given your WiFi password even before you are handed your room keys.

How bad is the effect of the electromagnetic radiation in Asian countries?

L.T.H.- For instance, Taiwan now has the largest radiation of exposure of any country in Asia, as WiFi service is pervasive and most people carry two mobile phones, one for personal use and another for business.

It has been scientifically proven that electromagnetic radiation slows blood circulation. So I realized thanks to a medical procedure that I took that a busy person such as myself can spend most hours of the day subject to harmful levels of electromagnetic radiation from computers, WiFi and mobile phones.

What products did Far East Pyramid design to address this problem?

L.T.H.- Our Powerlink SavLink & Lcare product lines were designed to reduce up to 95% of the electromagnetic radiation emitting from most electronic devices, including mobile phones, computers and WiFi routers. We have found that hospital in Malaysia and Singapore have been very receptive to this kind of technology, as it can improve micro-blood circulation in patients and all type of centres where different health-care treatments are provided, as proven by the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) already obtained.

We have also already started exporting to several Taiwanese medical centers recently. But I believe that there needs to be an information campaign for the private users to take up this kind of products, that is why we have started with the hospital and health-care markets in nearby Asian countries.

How is the production carried out for these innovative products?

L.T.H.- We at Far East Pyramid have carried out all the R&D for these products



and the actual manufacturing takes place at some OEM's here in Johor State in Malaysia, while the final inspection is taking place at our facilities before they are shipped to our customers.

We spent the first six years developing the technology behind these products and testing them, until only four years ago we finally started production for the market, so we are still quite new and have a great potential to grow in front of us.

We also produce and sell a line multi-functional sockets called Modulinks, that are designed to be able to replace any damaged unit without replacing the whole rack, so if there is an electronic shock the waste produced will be much smaller than otherwise, so the ecological impact is greatly reduced.

What markets will you be targeting for your Powerlink products?

L.T.H.- We would like to expand our current reach beyond our markets of Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan and have our products reach Europe, North America and Japan soon.

In order to achieve that, we are looking for partnerships in those countries that can form a long-term relationships with us, in order to work hand-in-hand with them and expand our reach to those markets.

While production our will remain in Johor State, as the ports here are very suitable for all types of electronics exports overseas, we are considering moving our commercial operation to Kuala Lumpur from where it will be easier to receive foreign clients and manage our international expansion.

We are optimistic that our products can make life easy and healthy for our customers and we are ready to expand worldwide to prove it.

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