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CCUS industry a potential new sector for econ diversification

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Page 1 of 2

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KUANTAN: The carbon capture, utilisation, and storage (CCUS) industry is a potential new sector to help diversify the country's economy, especially for the states involved, thereby reducing the dependency on the oil and gas industry.

Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) strategic and quality management centre's senior director Associate Professor Dr Herma Dina Setiabudi said its implementation is expected to attract global investors who prioritise environmental sustainability.

The initiative will create job opportunities and further boost Malaysia's technology and innovation, the UMPSA Chemical and Process Engineering Technology Faculty lecturer said.

"CCUS projects require skilled labour in various fields such as engineering, environmental science, and information technology, which can create new job opportunities for the local community," Herma Dina said.

"The development and implementation of CCUS require advanced technology and innovation to drive technical and engineering capabilities and to integrate upstream and downstream petroleum and petrochemical industries," she told Bernama.

Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli reportedly said that CCUS is among the pilot projects under the National Energy Transition Roadmap and the high-impact industry is expected to economically benefit the states concerned.

The government has so far identified Terengganu, Pahang, Sabah, and Sarawak as industry drivers due to their inactive oil wells and existing terminal facilities to conduct CCUS activities.

To prepare state governments for the CCUS industry, Herma Dina said relevant parties need to identify and manage potential risks with stringent policies and procedures for safety management and environmental protection, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) leaking into the environment.

Other initiatives include creating policies and regulations to support the adoption and expansion of CCUS technology, including facilitating related administrative and management processes.

"Additionally, public awareness of CCUS benefits has to be improved via information and education campaigns. The government can also collaborate with universities and industry players to conduct research and to provide platforms to train the workforce," she said.

Meanwhile, the chairman of Pahang State Executive Councillor for Investment, Industries, Science, Technology, and Innovation Committee Datuk Mohamad Nizar Najib said the state is supportive of the zero-carbon 2050 agenda.

Nevertheless, the method and technology are still new in Pahang and have to be looked at in detail with the federal government and industry players. – Bernama