

MGRC is confident of positive growth

by FARAH ADILLA

GENOME sequencing and analysis services provider Malaysian Genomics Resource Centre Bhd (MGRC) is confident of a positive growth looking at the anticipated industry developments in the next decade.

Its executive director Munirah Abdul Hamid said the price of the genetic sequencing machine has dropped exponentially over the years, making genomic study affordable and possible.

"Genome analysis has become significantly important in this region as

the level of awareness has increased profoundly on how meaningful genomics data can benefit an individual, a family and the nation," she told *The Malaysian Reserve* in an interview.

Munirah co-founded the company with her husband, Robert George

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Anticipates more demand for its services

FROM P1 MGRC

Hercus @ Abdul Karim Hercus, who is MGRC's managing director. Together, they control a 69.45% stake in the company, according to the company's 2010 annual report.

Being Asia's sole commercial provider for the growing bioinformatics analysis industry, MGRC believes that its purchase of new sequencing machines will help foster new business opportunities in the near future.

"With the arrival of our next generation sequencing machine, Illumina Hi-Seq 2000, we anticipate more demand for our services.

"Previously our focus was on analysis. With the in-house sequencing machine, our income stream will now also include sequencing and further analysis," Munirah said.

A research report by CIMB Research Pte Ltd said the bio-

informatics analysis industry is expected to grow to about US\$10.4 billion in 2014, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) growth of 24.9%.

The increased momentum of outsourcing by big multinationals "bodes well" for MGRC, it said.

For its financial year ended June 30, 2010 (FY10), MGRC's net profit dropped 7.5% to RM9.32 million from RM12 million the year before.

Its revenue dropped 22.3% in revenue to RM15.78 million from RM17.06 million in FY09, with a majority of it coming from contract genomics services for projects run for its customers in Malaysia.

MGRC has successfully completed a wide range of projects from investigating genomes to identifying risk genes and mutations, it said in its 2010 annual report.



Pic by Ismail Che Rus

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In agriculture, genomics and bioinformatics are used to accelerate the discovery of genetic markers in plants and animals, and to study gene in-

teractions for improved crops and healthier animals.

In energy, genomics and bioinformatics are being used to identify genes in a variety of plants and microbes to develop faster growing plants for biomass, increase the extraction of oil from plants, and also explore their use as efficient sources of oil.

Munirah said MGRC's chances to be the leading brand in genome sequencing and analysis is bright as it has the required equipment and technology.

"We are leading in the field of genome analysis because we have the expertise and experience to extract meaningful data for our customers.

"Genome sequencing and analysis are highly sought after globally and we already have our foot in this prospective and growing space," she added.