

ECER: ACCELERATING NEXT PHASE OF GROWTH

As Malaysia advances toward a more balanced and competitive economy, the East Coast Economic Region (ECER) is steadily redefining itself as the nation's next growth area, a region where infrastructure, industry and sustainability converge to create long-term value for investors.

Once regarded as a quiet hinterland, the East Coast today is assuming a transformative role in Malaysia's industrial map. Anchored by enhanced connectivity, cost competitiveness and natural resource depth, ECER is fast becoming the country's preferred destination for strategic and sustainable investments.

Connectivity has been central to unlocking the region's potential. With major infrastructure projects coming online, ECER is now seamlessly linked to other key economic hubs in Malaysia.

"The East Coast is closer than you think," says Datuk Ragu Sampasivam, Chief Operating Officer of the East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC). "With the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), Kuantan Port expansion and upgraded highways, the region is now more accessible, more connected, and more competitive than ever before. These infrastructure will be able to boost the industrial sector by reducing transport costs, improving reach to major economic areas within the region and connect people to jobs."

By early 2027, the ECRL's cargo and passenger services will connect Gombak, Kuala Lumpur, to Kota Bharu, Kelantan — linking Port Klang to Kuantan Port, reducing travel time, and improving logistics efficiency. Together with the expanded deep-water facilities at Kuantan Port, ECER is positioned as a strategic gateway to regional markets such as China, Japan and ASEAN.

"From Kuantan Port, investors have accessibility to ASEAN countries and the far east. The ECRL strengthens Malaysia's logistics ecosystem and gives investors a real advantage in cost and connectivity," adds Datuk Ragu.

These developments, coupled with ample industrial land and lower operating costs, are reshaping the investment landscape. As of October 2025, ECERDC has recorded over RM11billion in committed investments, surpassing its

annual target of RM10 billion, a clear evidence of growing investor confidence in the region's readiness. It has also achieved over RM9 billion in realised investments, inching towards its annual target of RM10billion.

A key factor behind ECER's success lies in its thematic industrial parks, designed around sectoral strengths to ensure investors benefit from established ecosystems and ready infrastructure.

In Terengganu, the Kerteh Biopolymer Park has attracted more than RM5 billion in investments from downstream and specialty chemical players, supported by the nearby Kerteh Integrated Petrochemical Complex. In Pahang, the Pekan Automotive Park continues to power Malaysia's automotive ambitions, especially in electric vehicles (EVs) and advanced component manufacturing. Whereas, the Pahang Technology Park is drawing investors in medical technology, data centres and advanced manufacturing, including a pioneering 3D printing firm producing cranial and orthopaedic implants.

"We don't just sell land; we build ecosystems. Each of our parks is equipped with reliable power, water and drainage infrastructure, enabling investors to plug in and start operating with minimal delay. Together, these industrial parks form the backbone of the ECER Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which continues to attract and facilitate high-value investments," emphasises Datuk Ragu.

Looking ahead, ECER is venturing into new industrial sectors such as Rare Earth Elements (REE) and renewable energy, both identified as strategic sectors under Malaysia's next phase of industrialisation.

With identified REE deposits in Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang, ECERDC is exploring partnerships with global technology players to build a responsible and sustainable REE value chain, complementing Malaysia's ambitions in electric mobility, battery manufacturing and advanced electronics.

At the same time, renewable energy projects, including solar, hydro, and carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), are helping industries transition toward lower-carbon operations. One of Malaysia's first CCUS hubs is being developed in Kuantan, with another potential site identified in Terengganu, reinforcing



ECER's role as a testbed for industrial decarbonisation. In Kelantan the development of the Nenggiri hydroelectric project in Gua Musang and solar farms in Pasir Mas adds to the green energy initiatives in the region.

"Sustainability is not just a moral obligation, it's a competitive advantage. Access to green energy and carbon offset solutions makes ECER an ideal base for companies serving ESG-conscious markets," says Datuk Ragu.

Beyond industry, ECERDC continues to champion inclusive growth by creating skilled job opportunities and empowering local communities through entrepreneurship and capacity-building programmes for youth and women.

"Every billion ringgit of investment we attract creates new jobs, new skills and new confidence. We're seeing more East Coast talent staying and returning home because opportunities are now here," notes Datuk Ragu.

As ECERDC prepares to implement the ECER Development Plan 2026–2030, which targets RM55 billion in realised investments, the focus remains clear, which is to attract strategic investors seeking scale, connectivity and sustainable growth potential.

“ The East Coast is ready for business, ready to complete Malaysia's industrial map, and ready to lead the nation into its next industrial era where sustainability, innovation and opportunity converge.



YBhg. Dato' Ragu Sampasivam
Chief Operating Officer