

Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Need for Survey on R&D Activities

The importance of research and development (R&D) capability and capacity in the industrialisation process of a country is well recognised. R&D and innovation have a crucial influence on economic growth, competitiveness and the position of economies in the global market. Many countries have embarked on the development of strategies to develop indigenous scientific and technology capabilities with a focus on the development of R&D skills. This will necessarily include the formulation of the right R&D related macro- and micro-level policies.

One of the most important phases of any policy formulation process is the assessment of the current situation. In the context of science and technology policy formulation, an assessment of the overall R&D situation in the country is necessary. Data on R&D and innovation – the status, development, and composition- are of key interest to decision-makers at all levels.

This is the third R&D survey report produced by MASTIC. It presents the results of a very comprehensive survey of various aspects of R&D efforts in Malaysia carried out by three sectors; government agencies and research institutions, institutions of higher learning and private companies. In 1994 non-profit organisations were included as one of the sectors in the survey. However, in the 1996 Survey this sector was left out due to the poor response from the organisations (i.e., only one out of ten organisations surveyed in this sector carrying out R&D activities).

The definitions and methods were based on the internationally agreed guidelines as put forward by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries. The data is also presented according to the broadly standardised way of presentation with a view of facilitating international comparisons.

1.2 The Objective of the Survey

The survey aims to provide information on the status of R&D activities in Malaysia. The analyses and recommendations based on the information will help the formulation of science and technology (S&T) policy in the promotion of R&D activities in various sectors, namely, government agencies and research institutes, institutes of higher learning as well as private companies.