

Reasons Labuan not pulling investors

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LABUAN: The Labuan Chinese Chamber of Commerce said Labuan would remain a "failed island" in attracting big-time investors unless the local government agencies have the courage to face the reality and do a re-examination of their development-related policies and get rid of cumbersome bureaucratic procedures which are clearly suffocating the island's economic development.



Chamber Chairman Datuk Wong Kii Yii (pic) said "look around, investors were rushing to pour money into Sabah and Sarawak and venture into various projects, why none is interested in Labuan?"

"The answer is very simple, I spoke to some of them and they told me they were scared to invest in Labuan because it took a ridiculously long time, sometimes more than a year to get the submitted development plan approved.

"And why is this so, because there were 13 agencies involved in endorsing the plan and many took their time, one agency

would take about a month and Indah Water Konsortium (IWK) took the longest time to approve as nobody seems interested. It is costly consequences as the investor would have to bear."

He said even in his case he submitted a plan and after more than a year including meeting officials in Putrajaya, nothing had come about.

He added, investors employed professionals such as architects, engineers and consultants to prepare the plan, they had good credentials and on par with that of those in positions in government agen-

cies, they could be held responsible if something was not right during the construction stage. "so why the delay in the approval" Wong asked.

He further said when the project was in progress, it was monitored by the government agencies where issues could be discussed and rectified.

Adding to this even the completed projected after strict supervision by the agencies was not issued immediate with Occupation Certificate (OC)," it takes months to get this."

He hoped that Labuan Corporation as

the lead agency would play a more active role in resolving these matters before we could hope to woo investors to Labuan.

Even local investors were so fed-up with the situation that some were preferring to invest in Sabah and not Labuan.

Looking back, most of the mega developments in Labuan had been implemented during the era of Berjaya.

Only recently a public-listed company announced an investment of RM60 million to lease the facilities of the failed halal hub to produce marine solutions vessels.