Parallel with the aspiration of the ECER Masterplan, the State is actively promoting the key industries in focus, and invites investors to participate in Terengganu’s assured growth through forming win-win partnerships with the government and private sector.

Tourism has been chosen as the primary area that becomes the impetus of growth given the State’s rich natural beauties and wealth of culture and heritage. Indeed, Terengganu is a natural candidate for intensive tourism activities, and truly lives up to its slogan of ‘Where Nature Embraces Heritage.’

Currently, the State is still a hidden treasure, attracting only 2.87 mn tourists in 2007, 89.5 percent of which were domestic tourists. However, the percentage of foreign tourists flocking to Terengganu is also increasing, with about 10.5% in 2007 compared with only 7.07% in 2003. This means that future growth will be buoyant in this sector. Indeed, the State predicts 15% growth in annual visitor numbers, particularly the affluent middle-class and business visitors. High-flying budget airlines such as Air Asia and Firefly have increased their flight frequency to Terengganu, making getting here easier.

Intensive Marketing
Tourism revenues are poised to boom further as the State government embarks on a massive promotion and expansion drive. Promotion will take the form of a sustained advertising and media campaign, including the dissemination of collaterals like videos, brochures, pamphlets, posters and exhibition materials and participation in global tourism expos. The State will highlight seven core tourism subsectors:

1. Eco-tourism,
2. Agro-tourism,
3. Cultural-tourism,
4. Edu-tourism,
5. Histrotourism,
6. Homestays, and
7. Sport tourism
BEVY OF BEAUTIES: Terengganu’s wealth of culture and heritage is a winning combination for tourism marketing.

Expansion will focus on the development of infrastructure and tourism products, which is where investors can come in. Capacity building offers tremendous potential. Currently, there are only 202 hotels and resorts of varying standards on the mainland and islands such as Redang, Kapas, Perhentian, Tenggol, Lang Tengah, Gemia as well as Tasik Kenyir, Southeast Asia’s largest manmade lake which is a draw for fishing and golf enthusiasts. There are nearly 7,000 rooms in total, which should be increased to cater for rising demand.

To encourage hotel investment, the Federal government has eased licensing requirements, including introducing a single composite license instead of 14 different licenses previously, and extending the validity of a license from one to three years to one to five years. Terengganu too is rolling out similar incentives at State level.

To encourage tourists to stay longer, the government is diversifying the products and services on offer. Cultural tourism should take off with a plan to zone Kuala Terengganu’s quaint markets district into a shopping haven a la Istanbul’s Grand Bazaar, which will boost retail. Eco-tourism is already driven by Terengganu’s natural attractions such as turtle landings, pristine islands, and jungle reserves, but this sub-sector needs more sustainable infrastructure and sufficient low-impact products to reach full potential.

Global sporting events too are making a splash and placing Terengganu on the map for sports tourism. Terengganu is taking full advantage of its beaches, waters and scenic landscapes to host international yacht races, challenging equestrian events, grueling world-class triathlons and endurance-testing mountain bike races. Major events on the State’s sporting calendar include the Monsoon Cup, an international boat race event under the Swedish Match Tour, the annual Sultan’s Cup Terengganu Endurance Race featuring world-class equestrians and horses, the Kapas-Marang International Swimathon, the Kenyir Lake International Triathlon, and the ASEAN Mountain Bike Challenge.

The government is also marketing Terengganu as a hub for MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events). Incentives have been drawn up to encourage the private sector to build and operate five-star hotels with integrated convention facilities that can accommodate larger scale conferences, and position Terengganu as a value-for-money and exotic destination on the regional and global MICE map.

PRISTINE: Sandy beaches and dreamy sun-drenched islands are among Terengganu’s most prized assets.
Amazing Tapestry of Wonder

Modern-day Terengganu is the envy of many of Malaysia’s other States. Even in its pursuit of modernisation, Terengganu has the ability to retain its rich heritage and culture that sets it apart from the rest. For those wanting to rekindle the romance of yesteryear’s Malay sultanate or sieve through the rustic life of a by-gone era, Terengganu has all these and more.

Perhaps nothing exemplifies the successful union of past and present as the Terengganu State Museum Complex in Losong. With its gigantic roofs and distinctive traditional floral motifs on the main building, it best projects Terengganu’s rich architectural identity. This grand museum that provides a safe sanctuary to many of the State’s secrets and memoirs is also touted as Malaysia’s largest.

Sprawled across 27 hectares of land, the museum complex consists of four main buildings set amid a beautifully landscaped garden, five traditional houses, and a Maritime Museum. It has 10 galleries that showcase anything from Chinese wares with Islamic motifs to intricate Malay weaponry. But it is the Terengganu Inscribed Stone (Batu Bersurat) that pulls the crowd everyday – an ancient Islamic manuscript discovered in 1902 as the earliest evidence of Islam in Malaysia.

The blending of religion and culture, meanwhile, can be seen with Masjid Tengku Tengah Zaharah. Lovingly dubbed the ‘Floating Mosque’ it combines the colonnaded arches and detailed bands of brick, plaster and marble of the Moorish architecture with modern-day designs. It gives the illusion of the building floating as the mosque was built on the estuary of the Terengganu River.

Another of Terengganu’s heritage wonders is Kampung Cina. A walk through the many streets can easily transport you to 18th century Terengganu, when the area was filled with Chinese traders that used Terengganu as port plying the trade route between China and Southeast Asia. The quaint enclave consists of many southern Chinese-styled shophouses, distinctive through its curved roof ridges, arched windows, carved signboards and decorative tiles. Two very old Chinese temples, the Ho Ann Kiong built in 1801 and Tien Hok Kong in 1896 have been listed by UNICEF as heritage attractions.

(top) SERENE: Perfect location for a picturesque mosque.

(bottom) QUAIN: Kuala Terengganu’s Kampung Cina is home to world-acclaimed heritage attractions.
FAMOUS: Pulau Duyung is home to world-renowned boat making industry.

Kuala Terengganu. Built of crystal shine glass and steel, the Crystal Mosque is a beacon for both worshippers and visitors.

For connoisseurs of art and culture, consider a visit to the State’s quaint villages. Seberang Takir, for example, is a tiny fishing village famous for its varied cottage industry. Here is where you will find generations-old of self-sustaining kampong crafts and trade such as batik printing, dried salted fish (a local delicacy) and keropok lekor, or fish sausages. The villages also swiftly capture the essence of Terengganu’s warm hospitality and illustrate the State’s close-knit society.

Pulau Duyung is another of Terengganu’s gems, pristinely preserving the traditional art of boat-building, and is an enclave of skilled boat-builders and artisans. Pulau Duyung’s boat-making industry is renowned in the world of sailing and is prized for the manner in which the craft is practiced. The skill is handed down from one generation to another and builders construct the boat without any masterplans or blueprints, building only through memory and experience. Boats are still made by hand using hardy cengal wood.

Apart from boat-building, Terengganu’s other famous crafts include the songket and batik. Songket is textile art of interwoven threads of gold and silver. Batik is produced by drawing out a design with wax and dying the material. It can be done either through block-printing, hand-drawing, silk-screened or tie-dyed. The two crafts used to be found exclusively as traditional fashionwear. Today however, they can be found in various forms, from cushion covers to table runners and bags to shoes, giving a fresh take to a time-honored trade. While there are many places for one to pick up a novelty songket or batik item, the best place to experience it under one roof is at Pasar Payang, or Central Market.
Pasar Payang is a two-storey market that houses all kinds of goods distinct to Terengganu. The upper floor is where you will find a cornucopia of traditional treasures, including Terengganu brassware, wood carving, woven knick-knacks made of pandanus leaves, and rattan curios. The lower floor is a wet market and is no less interesting, with fresh seafood, preserved sea products, vegetables and more. As the main market for Kuala Terengganu locales, it is a place that best combine the culture and heritage of the State. The atmosphere here is that of familiarity and informality. The camaraderie between shop owners and shoppers are unmistakable, and captures the simple pleasures of past days gone by.

Extreme Adventures, Exotic Fun

There is room for all your big adventures in the wide-open space of Terengganu. From international yacht races and equestrian events to world-class triathlons and mountain bike races, Terengganu’s full slate of events will satisfy any sporting enthusiast. Even as the monsoon season lashes its fury in the latter part of the year, good fun can be found in much of the State for those seeking some action or an adrenaline rush.

The much talked-about event that has brought the glitz and glamour of Hollywood to this coastal state is the Monsoon Cup. Held in Pulau Duyong, an island famed for its generations-old of traditional boat master builders, the Monsoon Cup is an international boat race event under the Swedish Match Tour. First held in November 2005, the race is recognised as one of the most prestigious events to grace the Terengganu social calendar and has been
dubbed by the press as ‘The Formula One of Sailing’. Since its debut, stars like Jackie Chan, Michelle Yeoh and Ferrari boss Jean Todt have visited the island to watch various international teams prepare for the race.

The island’s high-speed winds and torrential rains during the early monsoon season make it the perfect challenge for seasoned sailors. The Malaysian leg of the Monsoon Cup is the 50th official event of the Swedish Match Tour, formed in 2000 to unite the world’s best match-race regattas under one banner. With its participation, the Monsoon Cup joins nine other selected locations around the world in the series as one of the must-attend regattas on the match-race circuit.

Apart from seasoned sailors, Terengganu is taking advantage of its natural assets to groom young talents in motorised water sports through the Formula Future State championship. Formula Future is a proven programme for training youths aged between 8 – 18 years in motorised water sports, with the eventual goal of equipping them with the skills to pilot powerboats in the highest league of competition – the World F1 Powerboat Grand Prix. The national and Terengganu Formula Future programmes have successfully unearthed world-class talent; Team Malaysia won several gold, silver and brass medals in the Formula Future world championships from 2006 - 2008.

The Perhentian Island Challenge held every September is an adventure race on the heavenly isle of Pulau Perhentian, long a favoured destination for beach-goers and sun worshippers. The challenge combines the adventure sports of trail running, swimming, kayaking, obstacle courses and mystery games. The annual event tests the physical and mental strength of participants while giving spectators a different perspective on Perhentian’s exotic and laidback setting.

Every April, the Kapas-Marang International Swimathon takes centre stage as participants take to the warm, open waters of the South China Sea. Swimmers start the 6.5km event from Pulau Kapas before ending it in the mainland waters at Marang. Attracting some of the leading swimmers in the professional circuit, the event has in the past attracted swimmers from Japan, United Kingdom, Thailand, Denmark, Hong Kong, Ukraine, Singapore, and Taiwan. While the race distance is less than a marathon swim, it is still a grueling event, pitting racers against each other, nature and themselves.
But it is not just the islands that have become arenas for international events and races. Terengganu’s picturesque Tasik Kenyir has inspired the Kenyir Lake International Triathlon held every April. Tasik Kenyir holds the distinction of being Malaysia’s largest man-made lake. Covering an area of 369km², it is also Malaysia’s largest rock-filled hydroelectric dam. The Olympic-distance race combines a 1.5km swim, a 40km bike race and a 10km run, bringing participants though the pristine waters of Tasik Kenyir as well as its lush tropical jungle surroundings.

Tasik Kenyir also plays host to the ASEAN Mountain Bike Challenge later in the same month. The race has 14 events with categories that include Downhill, Cross Country and Criterium for both men and women. The event attracts formidable athletes and amateurs who are drawn to Tasik Kenyir’s diverse landscape of hills, lakes, slopes, and rugged terrains – an ideal topography.
that challenges even the most ambitious mountain bikers. The ASEAN Mountain Bike Challenge is guaranteed to bring more racing action and endurance racing for riders of all levels.

Terengganu is also fast becoming a centre for equestrian sports. Horse lovers will relish the annual Sultan's Cup Terengganu Endurance Race held every August, which is yet another highly-anticipated event for the State. This competition is held over two days and is the first of its kind to be held in a tropical climate. Race distances begin at 10km and peak at 160km, the latter greatly testing riders' skills and endurance in a gruelling 21-hour competition.

Other annual State and national-level events include the Mini Bike Terengganu Challenge (January), Kenyir Motocross Carnival (February), Terengganu Golf Heritage (April), GP Joran Carnival Terengganu Circuit (May), and Terengganu Beach Extreme Challenge (June).