

## Expertise for Export

Malaysia is not only exporting palm oil but also all the expertise that goes into processing and refining the oil. The need to build plants is good news for local engineering firms such as Lipochem. Its Managing Director, Koh Pak Meng, said his company was engaged by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) as a consultant to build biodiesel plants based on the board's proprietary technology in 2005. The other company is Oiltek, and these two companies are exporting technology for normal (non-winter use) first generation biodiesel plants using refined oils as feedstock. Chemical engineers play a key role in the field of process engineering, especially in optimising the production process so that it produces the highest amount of value-added products while using the least amount of energy and water. In recent years, process engineering has become the new golden field as the downstream part of the palm oil industry flourished. Present-day clients, including those based in Indonesia, also recognise the importance of capitalising on a highly efficient process, and not just on the plant capacity. Clients also demand that the plants be fully automated, and robust, so as to reduce down time.

*(Sourced from The Star, 1 January 2013)*