Good idea to introduce work-from-home policy

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PETALING JAYA: Although it will take some time to implement, giving employees an option to work from home will bring long-term benefits.

“It’s not in our culture yet but it’s something to explore,” Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said yesterday.

He was responding to a call by the Malaysian Wellness Society and Malaysian Trades Union Congress to employers to continue allowing their employees to work from home even after the movement control order (MCO) is lifted.

Shamsuddin said one of the greatest challenges presented by such a policy would be putting in place essential IT equipment and services, especially the internet.

“The reliability of our internet service needs urgent attention. The cost of the service in the country is high but it lacks capacity compared with other parts of the world.”

Nonetheless, he said, employers and employees would benefit if a work from home policy becomes a reality.

“Employees will be able to save on travel costs while utility bills for employers will shrink,” Shamsuddin said.

On a wider scale, he said, road congestion would also be eased, benefitting other road users.

He said while it would be good to encourage employers to subsidise a portion of their employees’ utility bills, it is an objective that will take some time to achieve.

“Employers should share the cost of electricity and WiFi used by an employee at his home for work purposes.”

However, he noted that this would be added costs for companies already reeling from the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Shamsuddin urged the government to offer incentives such as tax reductions to encourage companies to adopt the practice.

“At the same time, employees must be disciplined enough to put in the full eight hours of work.”