

Press Release

STA encourages research and development in forest plantation

KUCHING: Sarawak Timber Association (STA), through the STA Forest Plantation Committee, committed to the forest plantation development programme through encouraging and funding research and development (R&D) projects that will bring benefits to the Members of STA. Since 2004, STA has funded R&D projects to a tune of about RM6 million, aiding and supporting eight (8) research projects that are related to forest plantation establishment in the State.

In 2015, STA approved an R&D fund to Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus (SUTS) for a research project entitled "Ecosystem Approach towards Formulation of a Biofertiliser Containing Growth-Enhancing Rhizospheric Microorganisms for Silviculture of *Neolamarckia cadamba* and *Eucalyptus pellita*". The objective of this research is to identify and isolate the beneficial rhizosphere microorganisms from the soil which are then used to formulate the biofertiliser for *Neolamarckia cadamba* and *Eucalyptus pellita*. It is hoped that the Biofertiliser formulated from this study could enhance the early growth performance of both *Neolamarckia cadamba* and *Eucalyptus pellita* planted in the State.

Towards the end of this project, a Workshop was jointly organised by STA and SUTS on 4 September 2018 at Wisma STA, Kuching to disseminate the findings of the research project. The Workshop received active support of senior officers and officers from Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources (MUDeNR) and State Forestry Agencies, researchers and lecturers from Institute of Higher Learning, as well as members of STA Forest Plantation Category.

Mr Peter Ling Kwong Hung, Chairman of STA Forest Plantation Committee in his welcoming remarks stressed that R&D is an important aspect to ensure economic viability and sustainability of planted forests. Through the application of R&D, it is hoped that the production of better quality planting materials and the development of better growing environment can be accelerated and determined at minimal costs. He urged local planters and stakeholders to take the initiative to carry out R&D to support the development of their forest plantations. He added that continued collaboration between the industry players and scientists from research institutions are much needed in the future for intensifying R&D in areas of common interests to spur growth of forest plantations in the State.

The workshop was ended with a demonstration session on the biofertiliser preparation for application in the field.