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This monthly news bulletin is produced by Sarawak Timber Association (STA) to disseminate information to our counterparts on training, research and other relevant areas.

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Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Signing Ceremony for the Second Batch of Pilot Projects for Environmental Compliance Audit (ECA)



Photo: Exchange of MOU documents between Mr Peter Sawal, Controller of Environmental Quality Sarawak of NREB (6th from the right) and Mr Philip Choo Kwong Hui, Honorary Treasurer of STA

The Natural Resources and Environment Department of Environment (DOE) as Board (NREB) and Sarawak Timber Association (STA) displayed yet another significant milestone in their long term collaborative relationships in the recently concluded "Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony for the Second Batch of Pilot Projects for Environmental Compliance Audit".

The Event held on 29 November 2018 at Wisma STA in Kuching was attended by approximately 100 representatives from STA member companies, the Ministry of Urban Development and Natural Resources (MUDeNR), government agencies such as Forest Department Sarawak (FDS), Harwood Timber Sdn Bhd (HTSB), Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd (SFCSB), the

Department of Environment (DOE) as well as higher learning institutions such as Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus (SUTS) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

Prior to the signing ceremony, a series of presentations were delivered by officers from NREB and representatives from participating STA member companies from the inaugural pilot projects. The presentations provided the participants of the Event with the background to the pilot projects and highlighted the challenges faced as well as benefits obtained from the pilot projects.

Pemanca Datuk Wong Kie Yik, STA Chairman in his speech, read by

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Photos: Mr Nelson Bijack (left), Forest Manager of Ta Ann Holdings Berhad and Mr Wilfred Sedau (right), SFM Executive of Samling Group of Companies sharing the experiences gained from participating in the First Pilot Projects for Environmental Compliance Audit.

Mr Philip Choo Kwong Hui, STA Honorary Treasurer, said that over the years, STA has undertaken many collaborative works with forestry agencies and higher learning institutions alike, not only to promote scientific and industrial research but also to facilitate effective implementation of the State's forestry policies.

He added that STA has explored many ways and amplified efforts to leverage capacity within its member companies in the forestry and timber industry on the common grounds that will achieve environmental stewardship through self-regulation. Among some of the initiatives undertaken was the Environmental Compliance Audit (ECA) Training Course offered and partially funded by STA since 2015.

To date, four (4) ECA Training Courses had been successfully conducted exclusively for STA member companies and benefited eighty nine (89) representatives from the State's forestry and timber industry. In addition to that, two (2) Training on Environmental Quality Monitoring (EQM) was conducted in January and July 2018 to further equip the industry with the necessary knowledge and skills to propel the industry towards self-regulation. A total of forty four (44) representatives had been trained by trainers with specialty in the field of water sampling and analysis. The third Training is scheduled for 6 and 7 December in Sibul.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed

between three (3) parties to the Pilot Projects for ECA; STA, NREB and the seven (7) participating member companies of STA, namely

- (i) Jutakayu Sdn Bhd,
- (ii) Kastima Trading Sdn Bhd,
- (iii) Limba Jaya Timber Sdn Bhd,
- (iv) Polima Forest Bintulu Sdn Bhd,
- (v) Raplex Sdn Bhd,
- (vi) Shin Yang Trading Sdn Bhd, and
- (vii) Zedtee Sdn Bhd.

Mr Peter Sawal, Controller of Environmental Quality Sarawak, NREB in his address shared with the participants of the Event that NREB intends to extend the ECA to the plantation industry. He added that as environment is one of the 3 pillars for sustainable forest management practices, hence the pilot projects are useful in preparing the forestry and timber industry for Forest Management Certification (FMC).

He further congratulated STA for continuing to provide assistance to the forestry and timber industry to ensure that the timber products from Sarawak are acceptable by the global markets.

STA hopes that more forestry agencies can draw on examples from the pilot projects and engage collaboratively with STA in activities to address common goals as well as effective and efficient implementation of policies.

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Did you know that....



The 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, better known as COP24 which convened on 3 December and closed on 14 December 2018 in Katowice, Poland is crucial because 2018 is the deadline set by scientists for the 2015 Paris Agreement signatories to adopt a workable programme of action to reduce carbon emission. Countries like the European Union (EU), New Zealand and Germany announced their own intention to step up ambitions by 2020, consistent with the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement 2015.

Source: *Hope and Despair for Paris Accord goals at COP24*. Available at: <https://www.scidev.net/asia-pacific/climate-change/columns/hope-and-despair-for-paris-accord-goals-at-cop24.html>

Did you also know that...

Vietnam and the EU signed their Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) in October 2018, and are now following their internal procedures for ratifying the agreement. The VPA was signed to promote trade of verified legal timber products from the nation to other markets as well as help the country improve governance of forests and fight illegal logging. Credible systems will need to be set up by Vietnam to ensure its exports of timber products and timber come from legal sources in a big to enforce the VPA.

Source: All about the Vietnam-EU Voluntary Partnership Agreement. Available at: <http://www.euflegt.efi.int/vietnam>



Auditor Training Course on Forest Management Certification under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme

In support of the State Government's policy for all long-term Forest Timber Licences (FTLs) in Sarawak to obtain Forest Management Certification (FMC) by 2022, Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) in collaboration with the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC), organised an *Auditor Training Course* on FMC under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) from 29 October to 2 November 2018 in Sibul and Kapit Divisions. The 5-day Training was attended by forty five (45) representatives from SFC, licensees in Sibul and Kapit as well as STA Secretariat.

The objectives of this Training were to familiarise participants on the requirements of MTCS and to provide the tools and knowledge required to conduct an audit of forest management practices based on Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for FMC (Natural Forest) [MC&I (Natural Forest)] as well as Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Forest Plantation Management Certification [MC&I Forest Plantation.v2].

In the Opening Remarks, Mr Ting Chek Hieng, the Management & Compliance Manager of SFC representing Tuan Haji Zolkipli Mohamad Aton, the Chief Executive Officer of SFC said that this Training will provide capacity building not only to the licensees but also to the officers from SFC on the FMC implementation, particularly on the audit exercise.

He also mentioned that the FMC is an on-going process and hoped all participants will be able to apply the relevant knowledge acquired from this Training when implementing FMC.

The Training was conducted by two (2) trainers, namely Mr Melvin Ku Kin Kin, Senior Executive (Forest Management) of MTCC and Dr Samsudin Musa, an independent auditor. During the Training, participants were given the chance to perform mock audit at the Kapit Forest Management Unit (FMU), one of the recently certified FMU in Sarawak.

There were four (4) modules presented during the Training as follows:

Module 1: Introduction to the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme

The Trainers highlighted that in Malaysia, MTCC was established in 1998 to develop and operate a voluntary and independent national certification scheme, known as MTCS, to provide an independent assessment of FMC and Chain of Custody (CoC) in Malaysia. Later in 2009, MTCS was endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and re-endorsed in July 2014 for another five (5) years. As of September 2018, there are thirteen (13) FMUs certified, covering 4.35 million hectares of natural forests and seven (7) Forest Plantation Management Units (FPMUs) certified, covering 101,921 ha of forest plantations.

Module 2: Understanding the Malaysian Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management Certification

The Trainers went through the ten (10) Principles and their Criteria and Indicators in the MC&I (Natural Forest) as well as MC&I Forest Plantation.v2.

Module 3: Auditing Forest Management Practices

The Trainers shared that the audit programme for initial certification shall include 2-stage initial audit, surveillance audits during the first and second years following the certification decision and recertification audit in the 3rd year prior to the expiry of certificate. The Trainers also highlighted that from 2012 to 2017, most of the non-conformities were raised on Principle 6, followed by Principle 4 and Principle 8 of the MC&I (Natural Forest).

Module 4: Evidence, Sampling and Stakeholder Consultation

The Trainers shared with participants of the Course the evidence gathered during the audit including its method, selection, number of samples and timing.

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Lab for Bamboo Framework

Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) organised a *Lab for Bamboo Framework* on 15 November 2018 at Hilton Hotel, Kuching. Representatives from the State's forestry agencies, institutes of higher learning and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were invited to the Lab to provide inputs for the bamboo framework to develop the bamboo plantation and industry in Sarawak.

In his opening remarks, Tuan Haji Hashim Bin Haji Bojet, General Manager of STIDC, highlighted the potential uses of bamboo and added that the export of bamboo products can increase the State's export earnings and thus the collaboration from relevant agencies and NGOs is important to develop the bamboo industry in the State. He informed the participants of the Lab that STIDC has established a bamboo nursery to produce the bamboo seedlings that will be planted in a plot near to Sabal Forest Reserve as well as other potential areas which have yet to be determined.

Dr Jong Lip Khiong, Bamboo Project Manager, briefed the participants of the Lab on the progress of the Sabal Bamboo Pilot Project. He highlighted that the objectives of this project are (i) to develop a model for future bamboo plantation which is technically and commercially viable;

(ii) to guide the locals on the better bamboo silviculture management technique for consistent quality bamboo production; and (iii) to explore greater business potential of bamboo industry in Sarawak.

Tuan Haji Hamzah Bin Haji Morshidi, Assistant General Manager (Resource Planning Division) of STIDC, introduced the draft "*Master Plan for the Development of Bamboo as a Renewable and Sustainable Resource for Timber Industry*" to the participants of the Lab. He then divided the participants into eight (8) groups for the open space discussion on bamboo framework which focused on the following strategic topics:

- i. Resource management
- ii. Market development
- iii. Technology adoption and commercialisation
- iv. Research and development
- v. Sustainable environment
- vi. Capacity building
- vii. Corporate social responsibility
- viii. Policy and institutional strengthening

In the closing remarks, Tuan Haji Hamzah informed the participants of the Lab that the outputs from the Lab will be consolidated and presented to STIDC Bamboo Technical Committee for consideration.

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