

Daily Express

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF EAST MALAYSIA

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'Sabah FMU concept most progressive'

Published on: Wednesday, November 27, 2019

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SAPULUT: The Forest Management Unit (FMU) concept in Sabah is considered the most progressive in Malaysia.

This was acknowledged by Senior Executive Melvin Ku of the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) based in Kuala Lumpur.

"MTCC is the operator of the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS). The MTCS is the first tropical timber certification scheme in the Asia Pacific region to be endorsed by the Programme for the endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC), currently the largest forest certification programme in the world," he said.

Melvin Ku had worked in Sabah before, based in Keningau and Pitas, with a private timber company, and he was backed in Sabah with MTC organised visit entourage.

The visitors from Europe, South Africa, India, China, South Korea, Australia, Sarawak and West Malaysia were also briefed by Robert Mijol of the Sabah Forest Department and Manager Teddysius Lawrentius (pic) of Sapulut Forest Management Unit (FMU 14) on conservation efforts and FMU concept in Sabah.

“Sabah has 3.5 million hectares of forest reserve (FR). Out of this, 1.6 million hectares is under the Total Protected Area (TPA) and 1.7 million hectares is under the Commercial FR (Class II).”

“FMU implementation is restricted to Class II FR after Sabah introduced the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) concept via FMU implementation in 1997.”

“FMUs are managed by the Sabah Forestry Department and the private sector licensee holders under the Sustainable Forest Management License Agreement (SFMLA).”

“SFMLA licensee holders are responsible to manage the FMU sustainably under the principles of SFM with its three main pillars of sustainability concept – Economic, Environment, and Social undertakings for the activities of planting, rehabilitation and forest harvesting.”

“In Sabah, there are 38 SFMLA Licensees. They are bound by the SFMLA with the Sabah Government and the Forestry Department.”

Teddysius explained: “Forest Management Unit (FMU) land use is divided into three parts: – Natural Forest Management (NFM), Industrial Tree Plantation (ITP) and Conservation Area (CA).”

“It is mandatory to manage NFM under Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) system.”

“Tree species in to be planted in ITP are from fast growing species.”

“CA is an area to be conserved and protected for curtailed purpose, for example, water catchment or high conservation value forest areas.”

On forest certification and compliances with regard to the Sabah Timber Legality Assessment (Sabah TLAS), Sapulut was certified on June 11, 2018 for Forest Management Certification for Natural Forest, while for the Forest Plantation, it is still in progress with Stage 2 Audit done in October, 2019.

Sapulut's natural forest management for quality timber output with a 25-year rotation cycle of harvesting comprised of 52,552 hectares committed to reduced impact logging system and skid trail planting.

Sapulut's industrial tree planting (ITP) covers 21,970 hectares planted with White and Red Laran, besides Albizia for plantation timber output with a 10 to 12 years rotation cycle, committed to BASIL or Planting Buffer Alternate Strip Internal Line.

The objectives of the MTC 2019 Familiarisation Programme for International Journalists and Trade Representatives are to provide insights on Malaysian forestry and timber industry and to introduce the roles and functions of timber related agencies.

MTC was established in 1992 to promote the development and growth of the Malaysian timber industry and was formed on the initiative of the timber industry.

It was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act 1965 and is governed by a Board of Trustees whose members are appointed by the Minister of Primary Industries.

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