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SPECIAL FEATURES

- Malaysian Meranti remains in demand in Europe
- Malaysian wood-based panels - A diversity of choice

INDUSTRY FOCUS

- Highlighting the endeavours of four Malaysian-based companies in areas of brand-building, product diversification, digital marketing, and mechanisation and digitalisation

A CASE FOR TIMBER

- Transformation of the Lintang Corner

GREEN GROWTH

- MTCS certified forests increase to 5.29 million ha

EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

A total of 14 major areas of significance to the Malaysian timber industry was the focus of a three-day 'MTC Brainstorming Session for MTC Budget 2021' held in mid-August 2020. All members of the MTC management and executive staff deliberated in detail the current scenario and challenges to map out strategic action plans for the industry's betterment. This is in alignment with the role of MTC, a key organisation tasked by the Ministry of Plantation industries and Commodities to serve the industry's interest. **For the list of the 14 focus areas and our report on the session, please turn to page 4.**

The Malaysian timber industry contributes significantly to the nation's GDP with more than RM22 billion annual export earnings in recent years as well as provides more than 100,000 job opportunities. Over time, it has continued to develop in various aspects with its players making the necessary changes and investments as well as adopting strategies and technologies to stride ahead. In *INDUSTRY FOCUS*, we showcase four Malaysian-based companies that are exemplary in brand-building, product diversification, digital marketing, and mechanisation and digitalisation. **Lumber Mart Sdn Bhd, Ah Hai Industries Sdn Bhd, Wood Art & Decor Sdn Bhd and Evergreen Fibreboard Bhd, share their business endeavours on pages 16-23.**

A total of 635,160.29 hectares of forests were certified under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) between July and August 2020 bringing the total MTCS certified forest areas in Malaysia to 5.29 million hectares. Of the total newly certified forest areas, 622,673.87 hectares are from five natural Forest Management Units and 12,486.42 hectares are from a Forest Plantation Management Unit. MTC congratulates the six concessionaires for their efforts and success in contributing towards sustainable forest management in Malaysia. **Our update on the latest status of MTCS certified forests is on pages 35-37.**

Belian (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) is a heavy hardwood tree that belongs to the family Lauraceae. In Malaysia, the natural distribution of this species is in the Bornean states of Sabah and Sarawak. Also known as Borneo Ironwood, the timber is sought after by artisans, architects, wood enthusiasts and collectors, and house owners alike due to its unique anatomical features. Wood hobbyist, Stanley Ngu King Hieng, has tastefully incorporated Belian in numerous applications in his projects and properties such as 'theLintangCorner' in Kuching, Sarawak and made this age-old timber forever *en vogue*. **For a visual feast of theLintangCorner, please turn to pages 24-29.**

Happy reading!

The Editor.



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MTC Brainstorming Session



Led by Acting CEO, Mr. Wong Kah Cane, members of the MTC management and executive staff participated actively in a brainstorming session held from 13-15 August 2020 in Melaka.

Going by the theme 'MTC Brainstorming Session for MTC Budget 2021', the event was organised for MTC to put on its thinking cap in charting out relevant strategies, programmes and activities beneficial for the timber industry, particularly for 2021 as well as several years beyond.

Having undergone a restructuring exercise earlier this year which, amongst others, streamlined ACEO and COO's focus on their respective areas of responsibilities, as well as emphasised on developing its human capital in terms of appropriate qualification, knowledge, skill and experience, it is timely for MTC to show its mettle in enhancing its support and services to the timber industry.

A total of 14 focus areas were extensively deliberated.

The event was organised for MTC to put on its thinking cap in charting out relevant strategies, programmes and activities beneficial for the timber industry.



The invited moderators from Vistage Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Mr. Richard Wong (left) and Mr. TB Leong.

During the three-day event, a total of 14 focus areas were extensively deliberated, as follows:

- Business Transformation
- Automation and Digitalisation
- Database & Information Management
- Market Penetration and Promotion
- Knowledge Workers
- Product Development
- Cross-industry Alliance
- Branding
- Raw Material Augmentation
- Public Perception Management
- Issues Management
- Digital Marketing and Communication
- ICT Infrastructure
- Human Capital

Moderators for the session were Mr. Wong, MTC COO Mr. Roger Chin Chew Choy as well as Mr. Richard Wong and Mr. TB Leong from Vistage Malaysia Sdn Bhd, an affiliate of Vistage International, a global organisation of CEOs and Business Owners that meet each month for members to mutually assist one another in running their companies more effectively.

Proposed strategies, programmes and activities from the session will be fine-tuned and deliberated further with key timber players in the country to ensure that they serve the interest and benefit of the various sectors of the industry in the immediate and longer terms. 🌱

Proposed strategies, programmes and activities from the session will be fine-tuned and deliberated further with key timber players in the country.



Mr Wong peppering up the opening session.



Participants of a focus area group.

Enhancing trade online with timber sectors globally

As countries around the world reopen their economies after the Covid-19 lockdown, companies are not only operating more on e-platforms but are also transforming their business operations to stay viable.

In a move to enhance trade and exchange ideas on how to further develop the timber industry post-Covid 19, MTC continued its online engagement with the timber sectors in various parts of the world.

The on-line dialogues held during the months of July-August 2020 were as follows:

- 3 July: MTC conducted a 'Timber Industry Dialogue' online with Mr. Li Peixin, Marketing Director of Shanghai Timber Trade Association, and Mr. Guo Liu, General Manager of Strategic Department of Shanghai Furen Group. MTC's aim was to mitigate challenges towards the timber industry from both countries amidst the post Covid-19 pandemic. Chaired by MTC Acting CEO, Mr. Wong Kah Cane, the dialogue was moderated by Ms. Alexis Chang, MTC Director for Market Promotion.
- 15 July: An online dialogue themed 'Market Challenges and Opportunities' with Mr. Anura Wijeratne, Chairman of Mega Timberland (Pvt) Ltd, and Mr. Tharindu Pathirana Founder/Chairman of Adelco Pvt Ltd of Sri Lanka was successfully conducted by MTC. Among the items discussed were the market challenges affecting the Sri Lankan timber industry and new potential growth areas post Covid-19 in Sri Lanka's timber trade and business. The dialogue was chaired by Mr. Wong and moderated by Mr. Khairul Anwar, MTC Regional Head for South Asia, Middle East and Africa.



MALAYSIA & SAUDI ARABIA
"MARKET CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"

Malaysian Representative
 Mr Wong Kah Cane
 Acting Chief Executive Officer
 MTC

Moderator
 Mr Khairul Anwar
 Regional Head,
 MTC South Asia,
 Middle East & Africa

Saudi Representative
 Mr. Ammar Quzieh
 Executive Manager
 Ramat Marketing & Distributors
 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Representative
 Mr. Mohammed Al Zamil
 Managing Director
 Al Woodworks
 Saudi Arabia



Mr Wong moderating the Malaysia-China dialogue.



- 28 July: MTC held a similar online dialogue session themed 'Market Challenges and Opportunities' with Mr. Sunil Gangadharan, Business Development Manager, Seaports Authority, Sharjah and Mr. Zulfiqar Ahmad, Founder of Global Lumber Resources Inc. and Global Home from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Market opportunities and the challenges facing the logistics industry in the UAE were among the issues discussed. Mr. Khairul, moderated the dialogue.
- 4 August: An online dialogue session themed 'Critical Information for Exporters' with Ms. Cindy Squires, Executive Director/CEO, and Mr. Joseph L O'Donnell, Director, Government and Public Affairs of the International Wood Products Association (IWPA) from the USA was held. The dialogue touched on the latest developments in the US market for timber products, targeted specifically for timber exporters from Malaysia who wish to export to the USA. The close collaboration between MTC and IWPA was the reason the dialogue was a success and MTC will continue the partnership with IWPA for the benefit of the industry. Mr. Chow Khooon Liam, MTC Regional Head for the Americas, moderated the session.
- 27 August: MTC organised a dialogue session themed 'Market Challenges and Opportunities' with two main industry players from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Mr. Ammar Quzieh, Executive Manager of Ramat Marketing and Distribution, a timber importer, and Mr. Mohammed Al Zamil, Managing Director of Bassem Al Zamil Woodworks, a joinery and interior décor fit-out company, shared the latest market update on the timber industry and the latest demand and trends relating to the interior décor sector in the kingdom. Mr. Khairul, moderated the dialogue.



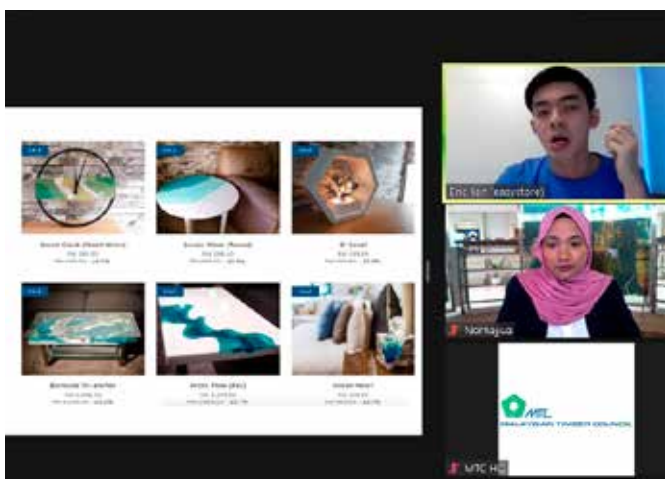
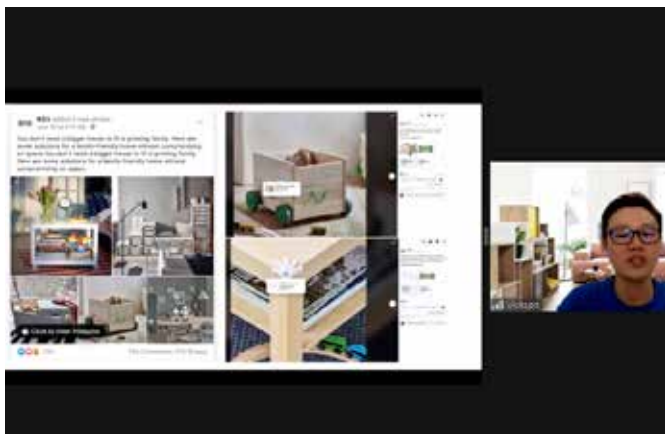
The Covid-19 pandemic had compromised many sectors by disrupting supply chains, logistics, and other activities pertinent to production activities and the timber industry was not spared either which resulted in contraction in business. For Malaysia, the situation has slowly been brought under control and various economic activities are entering recovery stage. The pandemic has caused significant disruption in the trade of timber and timber products resulting in contraction in businesses. As such, the dialogues were part of MTC's continuing efforts to deliberate on key actions to mitigate challenges towards the timber industry amidst the post COVID-19 situation, the latest business development and potential in various markets as well as to provide market updates for Malaysian timber and timber products. 🌱



MTC's Webinar Series



The webinar on digital planning in progress.



The one word that has been on everyone's lips since the Covid-19 pandemic is "digitalisation". The pandemic had stamped the need for businesses to digitalise and automate in order to remain viable. Arming oneself with new skill sets revolving around digitalisation became a necessity which the human resources sector had to embrace quickly.

To assist the Malaysian timber industry adapt to the new normal by embracing digital technologies for better business performance and to encourage the transformation of the industry into the digital sphere, MTC started a series of webinars to facilitate two-way discussions and knowledge-sharing on digitalisation.

The MTC's webinars organised in July-August 2020, were as follows:

- **9 July: 'Digital Planning – How to Get Started for Micro, Small and Medium Businesses?'** by Mr. Alwin Ng, Director and Founder, SmartB Solutions Sdn Bhd.
- **16 July: 'Create Better Talent Organization and Automate People Operations'** by Mr. Effon Khoo, Founder, Kakitangan.com.
- **30 July: 'Step by Step Guideline to Digitize Your Business'** by Mr. Vickson Tan, VP Marketing, Exabytes.
- **6 Aug: 'Understand the eCommerce Trend That Affects Wholesale Distribution'** by Mr. TK Chuah, Founder & CEO, Boostorder
- **12 August: 'How To Bring Your Business Online In One Day'** by Mr. Eric Lian, Marketing and Partnership Executive, EasyStore.
- **27 August: 'How Online Technology Can Grow Your Business'** by Mr. Wei Jie Neo, Small Business Specialists, Xero.

The six presenters had their listeners in rapt attention as they imparted tips on revamping their business operations and how operating on e-platforms has become the norm. 🌱

CIFM 2020/interzum Guangzhou 2020

China International Furniture Machinery & Furniture Raw Materials Fair (Guangzhou) (CIFM) 2020 was held in the China Import and Export Fair Complex (Pazhou Complex) from 27-30 July 2020. The 45th China International Furniture Fair (Guangzhou) was held concurrently with interzum Guangzhou 2020.

The original schedule for CIFM/interzum Guangzhou each year is in March. This year, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the Guangdong Provincial Pneumonia Epidemic Leading Group Office for Prevention and Control of New Coronavirus Infection, the Department of Commerce of Guangdong Province, and the Guangzhou Municipal Commerce Bureau had issued notices to restrict mass activities, and suspended large-scale economic and trade activities province-wide. All large-scale exhibitions in the city of Guangzhou in the past few months were also halted. As a result, CIFM 2020/interzum Guangzhou was postponed to 27-30 July 2020.

As one of Asia's leading comprehensive trade show for woodworking machinery, upholstery machinery, furniture materials and interior decor, CIFM 2020/interzum Guangzhou was held together with the China International Furniture Fair (Office Furniture) and the China International Furniture Fair (Home Furniture). These three exhibitions showcased the whole industrial chain of the furniture industry, from raw materials to finished products. It is anticipated that these three shows will bring back the confidence and market demand after the COVID-19.

Custom Furniture Suppliers Zone and 20 Plus 20 Annual List - these two traditional activities were still scheduled in interzum Guangzhou. Some of the top 20 most influential and innovative furniture accessories were showcased at the entrance of the fairground. In addition, a new event named "Offline-2-Online Live Business Matching" was held for the first time this year. This business matching programme aims to break time and location boundaries, serves to offer buyers with an understanding of the latest market conditions without having to be physically present, and helps the buyers to identify upcoming opportunities during the industry recovery period in the second half of 2020. Another newly launched programme is



Attending to an enquiry at the MTC booth.

"InnovTour", which was held for the first time this year - this is a guided buyer tour programme for buyers to have a business tour in this exhibition and to discover suitable furniture accessories.

Due to the COVID-19, the total number of exhibitors in CIFM 2020/interzum Guangzhou was 806, a decrease of 47%.

MTC, represented by its East Asia Office, participated in CIFM 2020/interzum Guangzhou with a 9sqm promotional booth. No other Malaysian companies participated in CIFM 2020/interzum Guangzhou along with MTC East Asia.

Timber product samples displayed at the MTC promotional booth were sawntimber of Merpauh, Kembang Semangkok, Kasah, Sepertir, Bintangor, Nyatoh, Red Meranti, Kasai, Balau, Keranji and Kedondong species. Laminated scantlings of Dark Red Meranti and Light Red Meranti as well as laminated boards of Red Meranti and Rubberwood furniture were also exhibited. The majority of the visitors to MTC's booth were local furniture manufacturers, designers, timber wholesalers and traders. 🌿



Lower turnout of visitors to the fair this year.

Malaysian Meranti remains in demand in Europe



Malaysian Meranti (*Shorea spp*) species are reputed for their quality, making them much sought-after by discerning buyers. They are the recommended hardwoods for outdoor and indoor applications due to their durability, strength and attractive grains. They are popularly used for decorative purposes such as doors, window frames, sidings, decking, mouldings, furniture, panelling and joinery.

Harvested from the sustainable forests of Malaysia, this beautiful hardwood has been a proven performer, enabling an endless expression of creativity for architects and interior designers. The most popular are Dark Red Meranti and Red Meranti. The major species of Dark Red Meranti that are widely available include Meranti Bukit, Meranti Nemesu and Meranti Seraya.

Timber species from the Meranti group have been among the most important timber types exported to Europe for windows and doors manufacturing for more than half a century. These wood types dominate the market, mainly due to their wide availability and good technical properties. Meranti is being used increasingly and is set to remain a key export timber to Europe.

“Malaysian Meranti has become established as the leading species among imported tropical timbers,” adds Stephan Buhrich, CEO of WOB Timber GmbH, Germany. A family-owned company, WOB Timber is a leading timber importer on the global stage with a rich tradition dating back almost 100 years.

Paul Holstead, Commercial Director at Timbmet, UK agrees that Meranti is in demand: “Meranti is a very popular species as it can be used for such a huge range of applications. We carry it mainly as a sawn product, so our joinery customers can adapt it to their needs. We also offer a lamination service at our Glasgow sawmill.”

Rob Price, Hardwood Sales Manager at another UK-based importer, Brooks Bros Timber, says: “Dark Red Meranti does vary in colouration but is one of the more popular hardwoods. Its main uses are for exterior doors and windows, cladding and flooring. It takes coatings well. Its key advantage in today’s market is price: it is cheaper than, say, Sapele, and gives a similar kind of durability.”

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Brooks carries a range of solid sawn Dark Red Meranti, some planed all round, and in machined sections varying from window board to posts. It's all PEFC-certified. We also offer laminated Meranti sections, which reduce waste for joinery manufacturers."

Ingvar Kristensen of Dekker Hout Den Haag B.V, from The Netherlands also shares similar positive views of Dark Red Meranti by saying: "Being the largest importer of tropical wood products in The Netherlands, we trade and process a wide range of timber species. It has been over 60 years since we started importing Dark Red Meranti and to date, it is still the most important species for us as well as the Dutch market for windows, doors and frames.

"We promote and encourage the sustainable and responsible management of forest in Malaysia, so that we can continue with and preserve this beautiful species for future generations."



To determine the durability of a number of Malaysian species including Dark Red Meranti for applications in temperate conditions, MTC commissioned UK-based Timber Research and Development Association (TRADA) to conduct a study using EN350:Part1:1994.

From the TRADA study, Dark Red Meranti was found to be 'very durable' and Light Red Meranti 'durable' which means both can be used for external joinery in temperate climate conditions without preservative treatment. Seraya was found to be comparable to hardwoods such as Greenheart, while Light Red Meranti was comparable to European Oak in durability. 🌿

For more information on Malaysian Meranti and other timber species, please use MTC's Wood Wizard software at www.mtc.com.my

References: UK TTF joinery magazine and MTC publications.



Malaysian wood-based panels - A diversity of choice

This article was first published in the European Panel Federation's 2019 Annual Report, which was released in June 2020.

Economic Outlook of Malaysia

The rapid growth and development of Malaysia's economy over the past decades is impressive. Malaysia is an exporting nation and has sustained a trade surplus for over two decades. In combination with supportive government policies, an educated workforce with English being widely spoken and well-developed infrastructure, it attracts many investors and accommodates a vibrant business life. For these reasons, the Global Competitiveness Report 2019 released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), ranked Malaysia the 27th most competitive out of 141 economies globally.

Malaysia has recorded a stable average growth in GDP of 4.7% annually since the global financial crisis in 2008. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus however, the Central Bank of Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia) revised forecasts for 2020 to -2.0-0.5% depending on the severity of the pandemic. Yet, forecasters are positive about the resilience of the country's economy, given its good response and proven recovery after previous economic downturns. Therefore, it is cautiously expected that the economy will pick up growth at 4.5-9.0% in 2021.

Malaysian Wood-Based Panel Industry

The wood-based panel industry in Malaysia consists of plywood and veneer mills, and plants manufacturing Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF), particleboard, blockboard and Oriented Strand Board (OSB). Developed over the years, these mills are capable of providing a consistent supply of wood-based panels for overseas and local markets, meeting the most stringent international standards. In the effort to regulate formaldehyde emission, Malaysia has introduced low emissions E1 and E0 standards to the industry.

Malaysian plywood, MDF, particleboard, blockboard and OSB are reputed for their consistent quality and durability. The country has been a leading manufacturer and exporter of high-quality panel products for more than 50 years and is home to over 80 panel factories.

Wood-based panels have proven to be efficient and economical, with greater homogeneity and stability across large surface areas. These panels are widely used for concrete formwork, laminated and engineered flooring, furniture manufacturing and for interior decorations as paneling and partitioning. Specialized panels are also available for external applications. In 2019 Malaysia exported wood-based panels valued at almost USD1.2 billion, a 24.5% decline compared to 2018. Japan remains with 43.6% the main destination for Malaysian panel exports, followed by the US (6.9%), South Korea (6.7%), Taiwan (3.9%) and Yemen (3.8%).

Rubberwood is among the most popular species to be used by the Malaysian panel producers. Yet over the past years the industry has turned to other wood as well. In Sabah and Sarawak tropical and plantation species are being used, while mills in Peninsular Malaysia opt for mixed tropical species and rubberwood. With innovative solutions and the introduction of the latest technology, the industry has found ways to exploit rubberwood biomass sustainably. Other initiatives include community planting and the testing of oil palm trunks (OPT) for MDF, particleboard and plywood production.

Wood-based panels have proven to be efficient and economical, with greater homogeneity and stability across large surface areas.



The wood-based panel industry is an important supplier for the fast-growing wooden furniture industry in Malaysia, which comprises over 745 mostly locally owned companies spread over Peninsular Malaysia. The sector has evolved robustly over the past three decades and has become a major producer and exporter of furniture globally.

The use of high-quality timber species and materials for the plywood face along with the application of hi-tech manufacturing methods and designs have ensured the acceptance and admiration of Malaysian wooden furniture in the international marketplace. In 2019, exports of Malaysian wooden furniture grew almost 14% compared to the year before and reached a value of USD1.8 billion. Main export markets are the USA (47.2%), EU28 (9.4%), Japan (6.9%), Singapore (5.5%) and Australia (4.4%).

The Malaysian government has targeted the wood-based furniture and panels to grow to an estimate of RM12 billion annual export value by 2020 in its review of the National Timber Industry Policy (NATIP), almost half of the total target of RM25 billion of wood-based product exports by 2020. In recent years, the focus has shifted to producing more downstream value-added products.

As a result, panel producers have increased their supply to the domestic furniture industry, keeping the value-added process within the country. Based on the latest figures from the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB), the wood-based sectors for the whole of Malaysia employ about 116,837 workers.

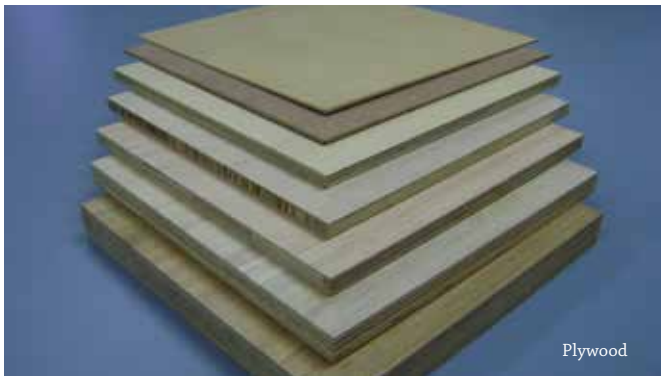
Plywood – A Multi-Use Wonder

The panel industry in Malaysia is dominated by plywood production. The country is among the 10 largest plywood producers in the world with an annual production output of 2.5-4 million m³. Within these top 10 plywood producing countries, Malaysia has the highest output per capita and is home to a number of major renowned plywood manufacturers. Almost 70% (1.7 million m³ in 2019) is destined for exports, with the vast majority shipped to Japan, followed by South Korea and the United States. The United Kingdom is the main export destination within Europe, with exports of Malaysian plywood to Europe not exceeding 65,000 m³ in 2019.

The common types of plywood produced by Malaysia include common veneer face plywood, decorative plywood, overlaid plywood including printed paper and polyester plywood, phenolic film-faced plywood, plywood for concrete formwork and container flooring, and marine plywood.

Given Malaysia's geographical location, the majority of plywood produced is of tropical origin. The popular timber species used for the production of plywood are Bintangor, Dark Red Meranti, Kelempayan, Kembang Semangkok, Keruing, Mengkulang, Mersawa, Nyatoh, Rubberwood, Sepetir and Yellow Meranti as well as oil palm trunk (mainly as core veneers). In line with the strategy to enhance downstream adding value processes, the industry is increasingly importing raw materials adding non-tropical timber-based plywood to its product range.

Malaysian plywood has achieved international standards such as Japan Agricultural Standards (JAS), British Standards (BS) and International Hardwood Products Association Standards (IHPA) for the US market and Harmonised European Standards (EN) for Europe market. Currently, Malaysia is among the world's largest exporters of tropical plywood with more than 50 mills in operation.



Plywood

Medium Density Fibreboard – Exceptionally User-Friendly

Next to plywood, Malaysia is a major producer of MDF with annual production output of circa 1.5 million m³.

MDF is a homogeneous engineered wood panel made by breaking down timber residuals into wood fibres, using a defibrator. These fibres are then combined with a resin binder and other components to improve the MDF's physical properties. They are then compressed under high temperatures and pressures to form panels.

The continuity and homogenous nature of the MDF panel lends itself very well to the mass production of furniture, doors, picture frames, profiled strips and construction components. The MDF panels can also be made moisture resistant, fire retardant and fungal resistance by combining various additives.

Consumers purchasing MDF from Malaysia have the choice of panels made from either 100% Rubberwood (plantation species) or mixed tropical wood (often certified by PEFC) and more recently, plantation Acacia. Rubberwood MDF will be in lighter colour, while mixed tropical wood MDF will be 100% free from latex spots. These quality engineered wood panels are available in the raw form or overlaid with laminates of natural wood veneer, paper or synthetics such as melamine, PU and PVC.



MDF

SPECIAL FEATURES

Particleboard – It's Resource Efficient

Malaysia's production capacity of particleboard is about 100,000 m³ per year. Particleboard, also known as Chipboard, is an engineered wood product similar to MDF but is manufactured from wood chips, sawmill shavings/off cuts, and sawdust without the need for a defibrator. Unlike MDF, particleboard is made from three layers (a fine top and bottom layer, and a coarser core layer). The wood particles are then combined with a resin and other additives, which are then compressed under high temperatures and pressure to form the Chipboard wood panel.

Particleboard does not have the same homogeneity as MDF, so it cannot be shaped and profiled as MDF, but it is more cost competitive. This makes it an ideal raw material for the mass production of panel-based furniture. Like MDF, particleboards can be made more attractive by laminating with wood veneers or synthetic overlays such as melamine and PVC. Many of the particleboard produced in Malaysia are from Rubberwood, meeting the various international standards. Like MDF, majority of particleboards are also destined for the furniture industry.



Oriented Strand Board (OSB) – A Sound Choice for Practical Projects

OSB is efficiently manufactured with wood derived from smaller logs and fast-growing tree species. Malaysia is the first in the world to produce OSB from 100% Rubberwood hence, ensuring better strength and durability. The country's only OSB producer is Pioneer OSB which started operation in 2014.

The production of OSB in Malaysia is small with a capacity of about 140,000 m³ annually. OSB is designed to perform in a variety of applications such as in construction, furniture and DIY products. OSB can be laminated with veneer with the end product resembling plywood. The applications are endless. 🌱

For a list of Malaysian wood-based producers, please contact the Malaysian Panel-Products Manufacturers' Association at www.mpma.com.my



LUMBERMart

*A brand
inspired by
Mother
Nature's works
of art*

For Mr. Charles Lee, the Managing Director of Lumber Mart Sdn Bhd (LUMBERMart), there is no beauty quite like nature's, and his company's wood creations refine nature's magnificence through a range of expertly crafted flooring, doors, furnishing, and bespoke furniture.

He explains: "There is history in every grain, pattern and colour in every piece of wood. In our efforts to find truly distinctive wood, we scour the ends of the Earth for the finest that nature has to offer.

"Our timber comes from the lush jungles and forests of Asia, America, Europe, and Africa, where they are carefully selected for their quality and beauty, and meticulously processed to showcase their uniqueness."

American Walnut, Belian, Burmese Mahogany, Burmese Teak, Chengal, Ebony, German Beech, Green Heart, Hard Maple, Honey Maple, Merbau, Wenge and White Oak are among LUMBERMart's timber collections.

With more than 20 years of experience, Mr. Lee's passion and dedication for timber and woodwork ensures elegant touches for people who want to make a difference.

Recalling his fairytale romance with timber that began in 1999, Mr. Lee said that LUMBERmart was birthed from the desire to provide quality timber flooring to Malaysians.

The following year, LUMBERMart expanded its operations to include installation services, as the demands for beautiful and lasting timber flooring continued to rise.

Driven by the dedication to become a recognised and respected expert within the timber flooring industry, LUMBERMart, in 2002, entered a strategic partnership with Bona from Sweden to offer total solutions for timber floor treatment, through technology transfer, equipment, installation methods and training.

As LUMBERmart kept growing and expanding, in 2006 the company moved into its current headquarters in Kota Damansara and build a warehouse in Klang, both in Selangor, with a total combined area of 10,000 square metres.

“Since then, our gallery of timber flooring showcasing a uniquely exquisite range of timber, as well as innovative installation ideas, have continued inspiring awe in our clients and visitors,” says Mr. Lee.

In 2008, LUMBERmart was awarded “The Brand Laureate – SMEs Best Brands in Asia Pacific” under the category of manufacturing of solid timber flooring.

LUMBERMart began to expand its international presence with the opening of its first overseas sales office in Singapore in 2010. It also became the first Malaysian timber company to be registered as a lifetime member of the National Wood Flooring Association, USA.

On furniture, Mr. Lee believes that there is global demand for unique carpentry works, and if local furniture makers can upgrade their products, it will be easier for them to make a name for themselves in the international market.

With this thought, Mr. Lee sought out the services of renowned furniture designer and master woodworker, Thomas Hucker. Pennsylvania-born



Thomas is one of the world's top 25 furniture designer whose acclaimed work has permanent collections in New York's Museum of Arts and Design, as well as art galleries and museums across the United States and Europe.

This win-win collaboration saw the development of four signature pieces under the Backley x Thomas Hucker by LUMBERmart collection, which revels in its fine craftsmanship, premium wood species and functional aesthetic with each piece individually crafted and personally signed by Thomas himself.

Today, both locally and internationally, LUMBERmart is recognised as a successful, home-grown, Malaysian small-medium-enterprise that has built a solid reputation for being expert wood artisans.

“All this while, we consciously try to keep a low environmental footprint, so nature's beauty is preserved for generations to come,” adds Mr. Lee. 🌱



Ah Hai Industries

Fifty-one years of product diversifications and innovations

Group Managing Director, Mr. Lim Hee Tiang, is thankful to his father, Mr. Lim Kok Leong, for laying the foundation of Ah Hai Industries Sdn Bhd during pre-independent Malaya in 1969.

From its humble beginnings as a producer of traditional wooden doors, Ah Hai Industries has expanded and diversified into a leading manufacturer of a range of high-quality wooden products.

Situated in Batu Pahat, Johor, Ah Hai Industries is today a major supplier of door jambs and frames to the door industry in Malaysia and various countries.

"Whilst specialising in door jambs and frames, we also manufacture and supply architraves, mouldings and skirtings to match the jambs and frames," says Mr. Lim Hee Tiang.

He adds: "We design and fabricate door jambs, frames and architraves according to customers' specifications. Our aim is to supply the best product solutions to the benefit of our customers.

"Our production processes ensure conformity to precise tolerances, absolute control over integrity of adhesive joints and unparalleled flexibility.

"Working directly with door companies, we design and manufacture engineered components which meet the needs of the ever-changing door industry."

Veneer or foil wrapped, Ah Hai Industries's door jambs can be tenoned as well as tongue and groove profiled for easy assembly during installation. It can also be 45-degree cut.

Its veneer wrapped jambs can be supplied in a large selection to match customers' ideal doors while its foil paper wrapped jambs are more for indoor usage.

The company's expansion also includes the setting up of a subsidiary, Planet Products Sdn Bhd, which specialises in kiln-drying treatment, moulding and finger-joint processing.

Through Planet products, Ah Hai Industries has successfully brought in thermal modification technology to the market.

"This advance technology can modify the DNA of our plantation hardwood into a class D3 durability wood, making it applicable for outdoor and wet area furniture and fittings," says Mr. Lim Hee Tiang.

This is part of the company's strategy to completely integrate its upstream and downstream operations to ensure cost effectiveness whilst ensuring total quality.

Marketed under its TEVOR brand, the material suitable for tabletops, kitchen worktops, staircase steps as well as garden decking and fencing.

The company's array of products also includes laminated and solid truck flooring. The maximum length of its laminated truck flooring is under 40' as the longest piece to fit in a standard 40-footer container. Keruing and Kapur are used for its solid truck flooring, the sizes of which are available at buyers' choice.

Ah Hai Industries invested into Gesso White Primed Products starting 2020 identifying great potential growth in this industry striving towards a new era for Ah Hai Group of companies.



Mr. Lim Hee Tiang (right) receiving the Excellence Award from Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Muhyiddin.



With customisation and innovation as its main guiding principles, Ah Hai Industries has garnered extensive experience in supplying high quality timber products to numerous large-scale projects worldwide.

These include hospitals, hotels, schools, apartments, residential housing as well as historical buildings in countries such as the Middle East and Western Europe as well as Australia, United State of America, Singapore and Malaysia.

Ah Hai Industries's business accretion and endeavours have been rewarded by winning the 5th Malaysia Power Brand 2011 Award judged and evaluated by the Global Brands Council. The company was also adjudged the Best Malaysian Mouldings/BJC factory of the Malaysian Timber Industry Board's Excellence Awards in 2013, which was handed over to Mr. Lim Hee Tiang by then Deputy Prime Minister, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Muhyiddin Bin Hj. Mohd. Yassin, who is currently the Prime Minister.

Backed by having obtained the ISO certification for Quality Management System 9001 as well as PEFC and FSC Chain-of-Custody certification for sustainable forestry products, Ah Hai Industries will strive to achieve continuous growth from all aspects of its operations, concludes Mr. Lim Hee Tiang. 🌿



Wood Art & Decor

Blending creativity with digital marketing technology

Seri Kembangan is situated close to Putrajaya, the country's federal administrative capital, and Cyberjaya, a town with a science park as the core that forms a key part of the Multimedia Super Corridor in Malaysia. The town is also located next to Universiti Putra Malaysia, one of the leading research universities in the country.

From having less than 100 houses in the 1950s, Seri Kembangan has developed rapidly over the decades to become a thriving township and business hub with numerous new commercial and residential properties including high rises.

With a population estimated to be 150,000 made up largely of entrepreneurs, businessmen, professionals, students, government servants who are working in Putrajaya, and other multinational corporations' employees located in Cyberjaya, Seri Kembangan offers ample opportunities for various businesses to tap and bloom.

Here's where Ms. Shafrinaz binti Haji Abdul Aziz, in November 2018 set up Wood Art & Decor Sdn Bhd, offering contemporary and chic home furniture that ideally represents urban, modern and cosmopolitan flavours.

Drawing on the expertise of only local designers and carpenters, Wood Art & Decor has become renowned for its wooden furniture of excellent quality, be they bar counters or tops, chairs, stools, console and dining tables, or living and office furniture.

Says Ms. Shafrinaz, who is the company's Managing Director and founder: "Here at Wood Art & Decor, we strive to achieve higher production level to fulfill customer's satisfaction and promise to deliver the best quality products with fair prices.

"We are principally involved in the design, manufacture and sale of wooden furniture and decorative items. We do not just sell tables and chairs. Instead, we work closely with our customers and clients to create their homes that are inspired by their dreams and individuality."

Wood Art & Decor's specialty items are their wood slabs produced from trees of various species such as the Rain Tree, Mahogany, Merbau and Balau, which are sourced locally and from overseas including Indonesia.



“Each piece of our wood slabs is designed to serve as the unique masterpiece in each living space and layout. Customers can source from our range of creative and modern wooden furniture that best suits their home and office designs,” adds Ms. Shafrinaz.

Strategically located within Seri Kembangan, Wood Art & Decor’s showroom and gallery attracts a steady flow of customers from the bustling township and beyond. In expanding their customer base and networking, Wood Art & Decor has gone actively into digital marketing.

Explains Ms. Shafrinaz: “In this time and age, online marketing is the trend for all types of businesses including the furniture and timber industries. For Wood Art & Decor, we are focusing our promotion online via platforms such as Mudah, Lazada and Shopee as well as Facebook.

“Mudah is one of the easiest and popular platforms for prospective customers to search for items that they need, and we do receive a lot of enquiries through this platform. Customers can also send in their enquiries via WhatsApp and our marketing personnel will respond promptly.



Ms. Shafrinaz (left) attending to a customer in her showroom.



“Although we are new in the market, our operation and sales have grown tremendously over the past one year or so. Our online promotional efforts, which have contributed towards this development significantly, will be further expanded, thanks to advances in digital marketing technology.” 🌱



Evergreen Fibreboard Berhad

Leading the way with advanced technology and innovative thinking

One is almost certain to own or utilise an item made from Evergreen Fibreboard's engineered wood-based products given the extent of its 11 manufacturing facilities, seven of which are in Malaysia, and its growing network of customers that spans five continents.

Initially set up as Evergreen Timber in Singapore for timber trading and veneer manufacturing in 1972, Evergreen responded to increasing market demands and expanded its production into Malaysia to include manufacturing medium density fibreboard, particleboard, furniture, value-added wood-based products and adhesives.

Headquartered in Johor, with Thailand and Indonesia where its other three and one manufacturing facilities are based, respectively, Evergreen is ideally located near its source of raw material as well as five major international shipping and rail ports. This enables Evergreen to export products efficiently and competitively around the world while ensuring on-time delivery.

While these and other factors contribute to Evergreen's success, its growth is also supported by its investment in leading edge manufacturing equipment from around the world to ensure maximum productivity and quality is delivered every step of the way.

Says Group Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Kuo Jen Chiu: "Our modern facilities are complemented by an advanced Information Technology system that integrates the Evergreen production and distribution process, providing the capability and flexibility to satisfy the changing demands of our diverse customers.

"Our MDF lines uses the Pallmann & Andritz Refiners, Bison Mende & Dieffenbacher CPS Press System thickness range of 2 mm to 25 mm. Our particleboard line uses the Dieffenbacher Press System with thickness range of 9 mm to 30 mm. European and Japanese equipment are used in our furniture while the melamine and print lines employ advanced Wernhoner and Burkle technology."

Complete with a 10-head Steinemann Sander with stacking feature that is paired to an automated Cut-to-size Saw allowing faster and better finishing whilst a fully automated packing ensures proper packing with minimum manpower. The complete line is able to produce E2 to Super E0 boards and is supported by a big capacity and efficient biomass energy plant which utilises all production waste.

"As for our furniture division that produces Ready-To-Assemble (RTA) furniture flat-packs, we have invested in multiple cutting-edge lines of European origin. Our cutting machine setup is fully automated, and of high capacity with lesser human handling. Our edging machines have fully automated loading and unloading functions with the use of robotic arms.

They are equipped to perform seamless four-side edgings that are accurately performed via computerised setting. Our boring machine similarly have fully automated loading and unloading robotic arms. This results in fast delivering high capacity via computerised setting and through-feeding and our packing line is equipped with conveyors to speed- up packing.

“Managing one of the industry’s most advanced manufacturing facilities, Evergreen’s dedicated workforce combines innovative ideas, efficient production processes, and a rigorous commitment to quality to deliver exceptional products. The Evergreen R&D team continues to develop new products while its engineering team is focused on increasing efficiency by improving production processes to maintain the company’s position as the industry productivity leader. Our team proactively eliminates equipment downtime to keep our operation running at maximum productivity, which is 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” adds Mr. Kuo.

In line with the group’s quality policy, Evergreen is committed in focusing on customers’ satisfaction and adheres to continuous improvement to meet their customer’s changing demands.

This involves carrying out its Quality Management System (QMS), which is certified by internationally recognised ISO 9001:2008, diligently and formulating it to achieve continual improvement.



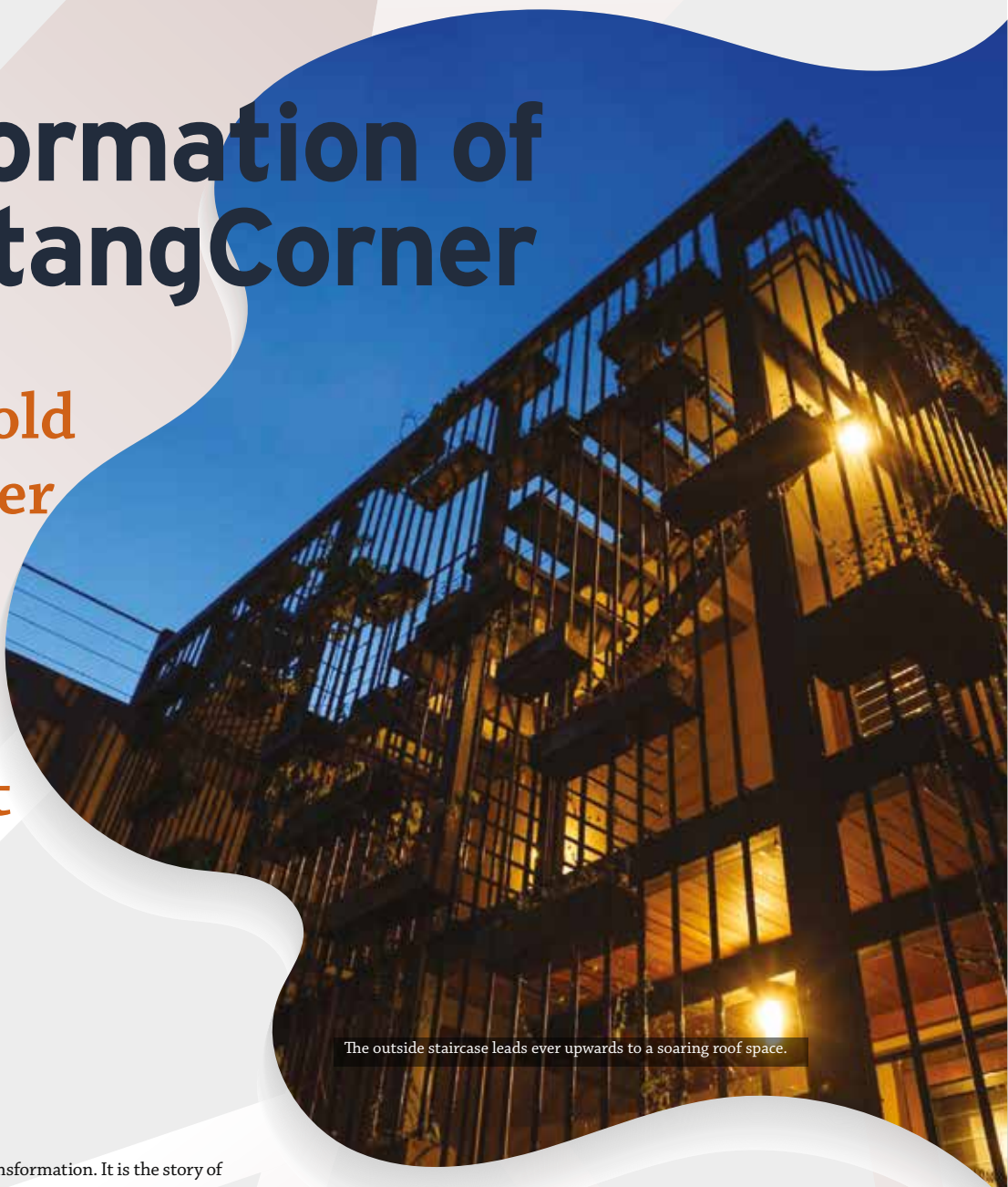
As an extremely versatile product, Evergreen MDF is suitable for numerous applications such as furniture, speaker boxes, and doors. Evergreen Particleboard is used as the core material in the construction of homes and office furniture, shelving and kitchen cabinets, as well as commercial and institutional fixtures.

Evergreen Ever-Lite Furniture, made entirely from quality Evergreen boards, is light and easy to carry and is therefore well accepted by consumers. It uses an innovative flushing technique that combines MDF with particleboard and reduces the material cost and wood content of its furniture products. The company’s achievements are a result of decades of invaluable experience in the wood-based industry which provides the necessary foundation for its never-ending quest to be the best. Using advanced technology and innovative thinking, Evergreen is well-positioned to capitalise on the demand for engineered wood-based products, says Mr. Kuo. 🌱



Transformation of theLintangCorner

Where age-old Belian timber pieces have become expressive works of art



The outside staircase leads ever upwards to a soaring roof space.

The story of theLintangCorner is one of transformation. It is the story of an ordinary house, almost identical to its neighbour, which becomes an outstanding testimony to human imagination. It is the story of everyday timbers and construction materials which become expressive works of art through trials and techniques. It is the story of a bland streetscape in an old established area which becomes part of a vision to creatively and innovatively enrich a city, i.e., Kuching, the capital city of Sarawak. It is the story of a blank and featureless building which becomes a transformative space – showpiece, retreat, home.

Structure

Four walls, two storeys and a roof, all surrounded by a narrow strip of lawn – this is where theLintangCorner began. The site was selected for its location rather than its style, a corner lot in one of the most sought-after areas in town. One hundred metres down the same street, half hidden behind a high featureless fence, stands an example of its original, uninspiring form, like time travel.

Now it could not be more different. It commands each view with asymmetrical structures of steel and concrete, clad in creepers, shielded by tall trees or standing proud in their industrial form. The outside staircase, encased in a towering cage of steel and timbers, leads ever upwards to a soaring roof space to sit and stare at the surrounding city, gaze at the stars through the sultry smoke of a barbecue, or to survey the structure spreading below it. No longer a simple square, this house is elevated from mere practicality into an exploration of every dimension of breadth and depth and height through immense atria, enclosed gardens, open terraces and winding gravel pathways through pepper vines and indigenous plants.

A CASE FOR TIMBER

Space

The imposing front door of finished timber is the only clue to the promise of the interior. Once inside, embraced in the cool of concrete, the floorboards in Merbau of rich shades of claret and ochre shine in the dappled sunlight. Timbers are everywhere in every shade and texture, marking space and leading the eye. Everything is open and yet it feels like a journey flowing from inside to outside, from one room to another, from roof to floor.

Each space has its own character and unexpected vista. The central staircase now opens up onto a vaulted ceiling, surrounded by crisscrossing walkways of individually weathered Belian timbers and banisters that each have the texture of time passing. The first floor looks down onto a double-storey atrium, an enormous addition to the original structure with no real justification other than the pure joy of light and height and breath. A bedroom connects directly to the shaded porch through an enormous wooden portal braced and studded with medieval metal. A compact kitchen leads out in every direction – a cosy family area, an entertainment space that draws in the outside or a secret garden for quiet contemplation.



Timbers are everywhere in every shade and texture.

The garden is enveloped by timbers in every direction.

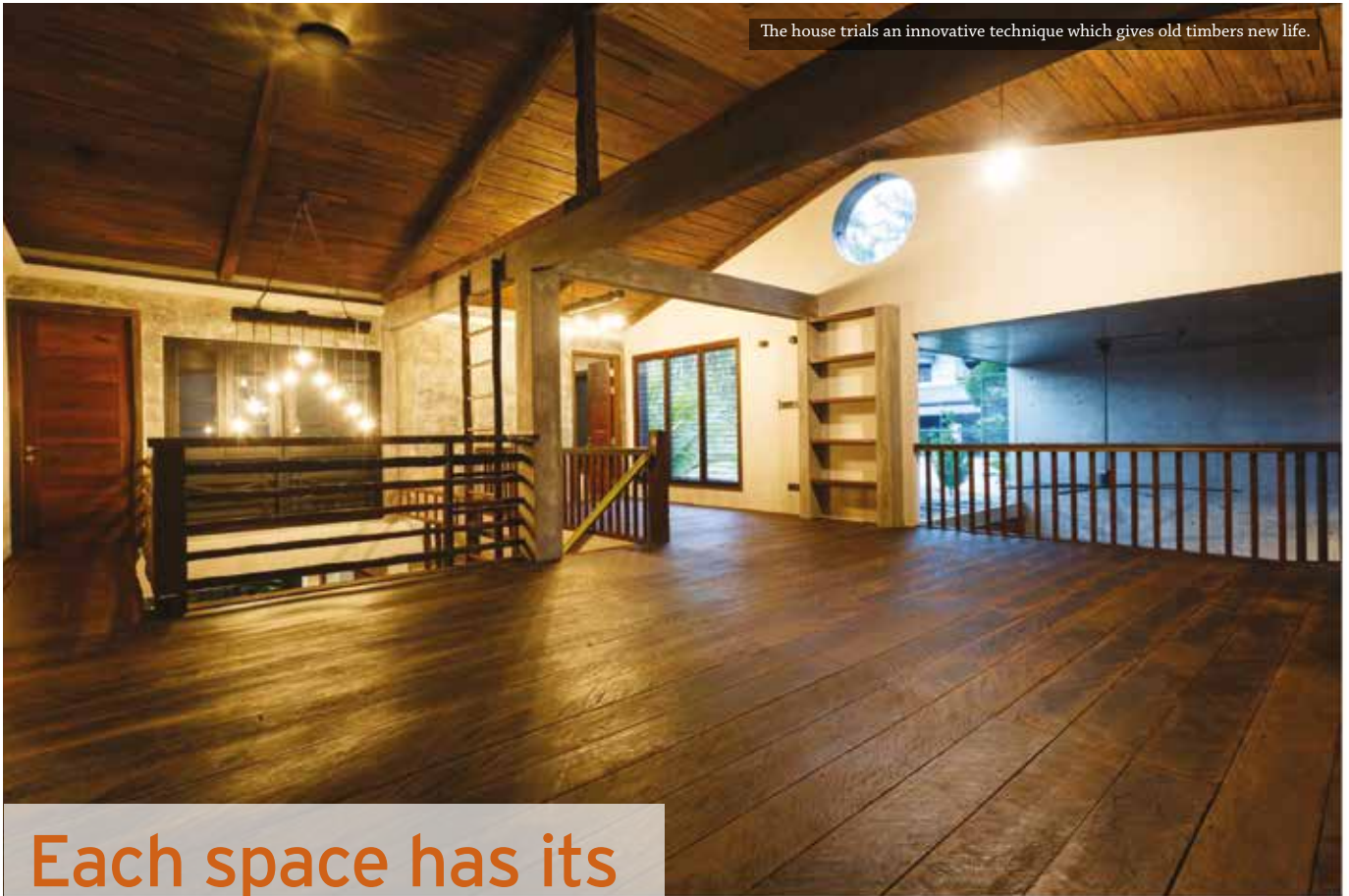


Use

This garden sits between the side of the house and the boundary wall and yet is somehow at its heart. Enveloped by timbers in every direction, it is sanctuary and serenity. It allows the house to breathe in the open air though day and night in safety and security. Exposed yet enclosed, natural yet constructed, it is a touch of the jungle in the centre of the city designed to allow family evenings surrounded by the soothing sounds of the stream.

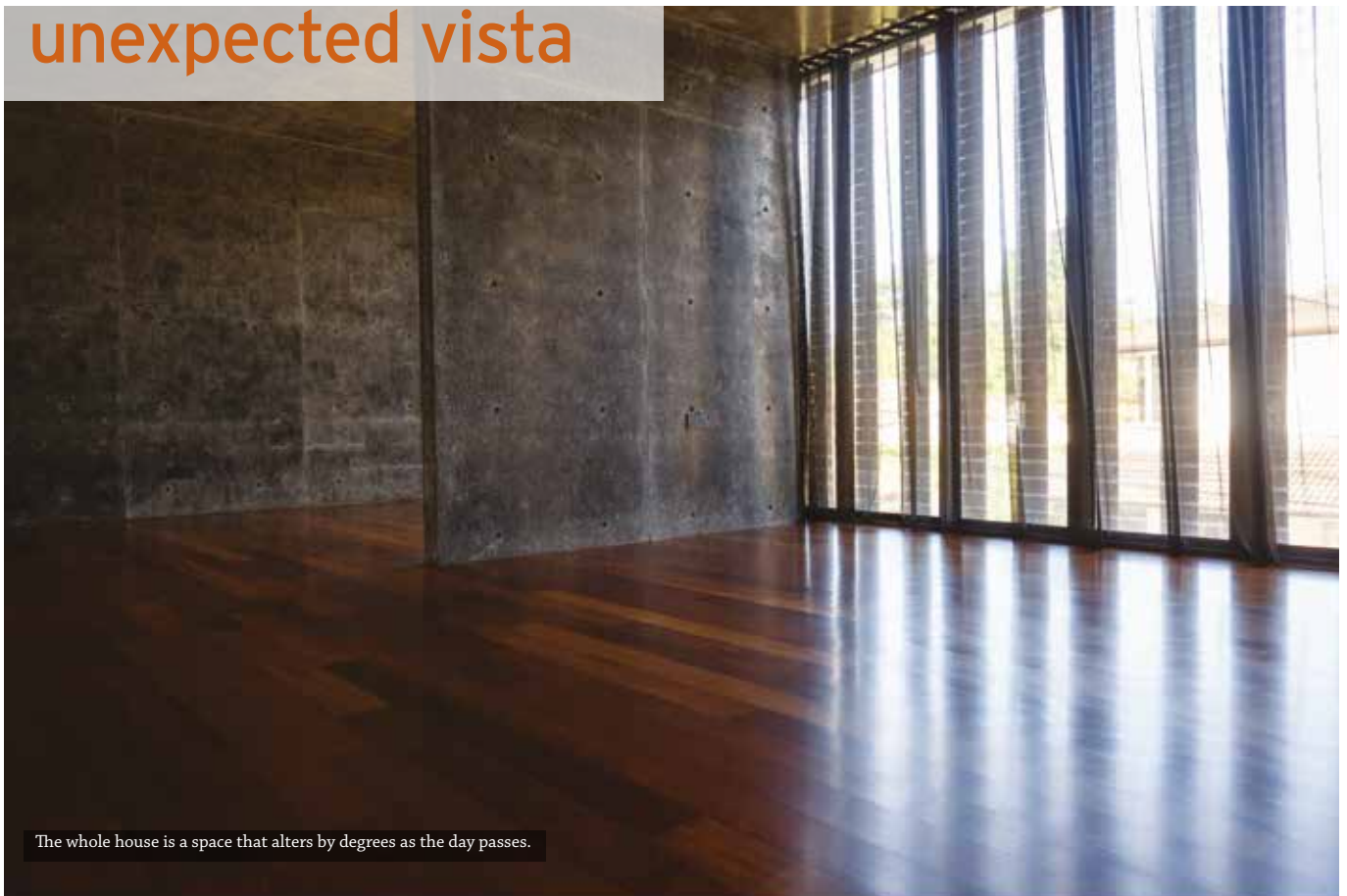
In fact, this whole house is a space that alters by degrees as the day passes, allowing enjoyment of the morning sun in the sheltered garden or its later evening cool. The house can transform itself with the time of day, opening up entire walls on electric runners to appreciate the garden with a simple fan and a passing breeze or else closing itself up tight for the enjoyment of air-conditioning. It invites family life into every space. What's more, as the sun completes its arc, the angles of the house and its elements transform the light into shadow play. It casts lines and shapes from the concrete pillars across the master bedroom floor and illuminates the grain of the timber so no two views are ever the same.

A CASE FOR TIMBER



The house trials an innovative technique which gives old timbers new life.

Each space has its own character and unexpected vista



The whole house is a space that alters by degrees as the day passes.

A CASE FOR TIMBER

Texture

Timber, concrete, glass and steel – these are the usual construction materials for any build but at theLintangCorner, they are given their full expression. It is their treatment that has transformed them into a beautiful and directional home with towering panes of glass reflecting light onto rugged wood panels and smooth concrete surfaces. This treatment can come from the forces of nature: sun and rain which weather old pepper poles into gnarled and knotted pillars, currents of water which pit and mark the surface of Belian reclaimed from the bottom of streams or even the interplay of light and shade.

But in this house, it is the artistry of the human hand that has completed the transformation. TheLintangCorner trials an innovative technique which gives old timbers new life in an entirely unexpected way. Every sawmill has offcuts of Belian, too precious to dispose of but too short to put to practical use. These might sit under the sun for many years, developing character in the form of ridges and grooves engrained by the elements or oxidized into deep black lines. So, in this house, they have become a work of art. It is a painstaking process to mill the individual timber offcuts to the correct depth, scrub them with a steel brush to bring out their beauty and finally, to paste them onto the wall, entirely by eye and through multiple iterations, to create a single form of intersecting textures. The result is a labour of love; not every carpenter can complete it in the same way and certainly not with a view to profit. But here it is the final transformation for a house of unique quality and calibre.



A simple wooden fan adds to the woody feel of the house.



The first floor looks down onto a double-storey atrium.

A CASE FOR TIMBER



A CASE FOR TIMBER



Floorboards in Merbau of rich shade of clarets and ochre shine in dappled sunlight.

Life

The Story of theLintangCorner is, in fact, just beginning. Its metamorphosis has been complete. From a simple 1960s structure, it has become a unique, stylish and inspirational space. Already it is an integral part of this sought-after area, yet it stands apart. Age-old timbers and indigenous plants have merged with artisanal carpentry techniques and expressive design to become its own kind of beautiful. Now it awaits its final transformation, from artistic vision into aspirational home. 🌿

NOTE: Article written by Karen Shepherd and contributed together with photos by houseowner, Mr. Stanley Ngu King Hieng.



The imposing front door of finished timber is the only clue to the promise of the interior.

World's tallest hybrid timber tower, Sydney

The 180-metre high tower will reshape the skyline at the southern end of Sydney's CBD. Photo credit: SHoP/BVN

A CASE FOR TIMBER

Software giant, Atlassian, will be building the world's tallest hybrid timber tower for its new headquarters next to Central Station in the heart of Sydney, Australia.

At 180-metre high, the 40-storey tower will reshape the skyline at the southern end of Sydney's CBD and become the centrepiece of the state government-planned tech hub, which will eventually span from Central to nearby Redfern station.

The building will comprise mass timber and a facade of glass and steel as well as feature a staggered outdoor garden and self-shading to control temperatures. Once completed in 2025, it can accommodate up to 4,000 Atlassian staff.

Billed as the tallest commercial hybrid timber building in the world, it features a mix of outdoor and indoor areas and a hostel on its lower levels.

Atlassian hired New York architects, SHoP, to design the tower in partnership with Australian firm, BVN. The building will operate on 100 per cent renewable energy and includes solar panels in its facade.

Atlassian's head of global workplace experience, Scott Hazard, said sustainability was a key focus for the tower, which would be built to last 100 years.

"Cross-laminated timber is an incredibly green material, and it helps us avoid massive amounts of concrete and steel," he said.

"Cross-laminated timber is an incredibly green material, and it helps us avoid massive amounts of concrete and steel."

- Scott Hazard

The building will comprise mass timber and a facade of glass and steel. Photo credit: SHoP/BVN.



Atlassian plans to take up most of the floors in the building, while the rest are likely to be occupied by other tech or start-up companies.

Atlassian co-founder, Scott Farquhar, said it also served as an opportunity to rejuvenate an area of Sydney that was the epicentre of "all of our public transport and kind of the centre of" the city.

Despite people working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Farquhar said he was taking a "long-term view" and believed even a company with a highly distributed workforce needed people to come together regularly.

"Buildings have to be a place where they attract your employees to come in, and do their best work, and it's a billboard to future employees. We have an opportunity to be maybe the first building in Sydney built for a distributed workforce in a new way, he said." 🌱

Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development



UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres. Photo Credit: IISD

“The COVID-19 crisis is having devastating impacts because of our past and present failures, as we have yet to take the SDGs seriously,” UN Secretary-General António Guterres addressing the virtual meeting of the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) from the UN Headquarters in New York, USA.

The meeting, held from 7-16 July 2020, was originally intended to initiate a new four-year cycle to review the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and assess progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

Importantly, it was meant to launch a “decade of action and delivery” after the 2019 HLPF found progress on the SDGs was lagging. Instead, it ended up being a rather unusual session. In a year when the COVID-19 pandemic caused most multilateral meetings to be postponed, the HLPF session convened on the originally planned dates, but was held virtually.

The overall number of participants was highest on the opening day, with almost 12,500 viewers of the livestream. This should not be directly compared to the 2,000-2,500 participants who physically participated in New York during the previous three years, as no one knows how many may have watched the webcasts in those years.

Given the considerable impact of the pandemic on human health and the global economy, the meeting’s agenda was adjusted by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Bureau to focus on the potential impact of the pandemic on implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Initial plans for the “thematic review” section of the HLPF were altered to focus on the impact of the pandemic, and on how the international community can respond to get back on track.



The HLPF virtual session in progress. Photo credit: IISD.

The general debate that normally takes place during the Ministerial Segment was cancelled. Instead, Heads of State and Government and ministers were invited to send written or recorded statements for posting on the ECOSOC and HLPF websites. Side events, exhibitions, and other special events also took place virtually. The overall theme of the meeting decided by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in November 2019 was, however, retained: “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: Realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.”

The meeting ended without adopting a ministerial declaration, contrary to expectations. Mona Juul, ECOSOC President, told the closing session that while an ambitious declaration was emerging, some issues still required discussion.

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) were presented by 47 countries, with 26 presenting for the first time, 20 for the second time, and one for the third time. Countries were given the option of livestreaming their presentation, sending pre-recorded presentations, or mixing these two options. A limited number of questions (either asked via livestream or sent in advance to countries who chose to entirely pre-record their VNR presentations) were allowed at the end by Member States and other stakeholders.

“We were not on track to deliver when COVID-19 hit, and the road ahead is even steeper,” UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed said in her closing statement. “We can turn this around if we stay true to the 2030 Agenda.” 🌱

Source: *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, Vol. 33 No. 65 | 20 July 2020

Fifteenth Session of UN Forum on Forests

The fifteenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF15) was scheduled to convene from 4-8 May 2020 at UN Headquarters in New York. However, UNFF15 quickly became yet another casualty of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of meeting in person, the UNFF15 Bureau agreed that the Forum would hold virtual informal consultations with the aim of adopting an omnibus resolution.

As outlined in the UNFF Quadrennial Programme of Work (4POW) for the period 2017-2020, UNFF15 as an “even-year” session should have focused on policy dialogue, development, and decision-making. UNFF15 was expected to adopt a resolution on several important issues including the 4POW for 2021-2024, and hold a high-level segment to adopt a ministerial declaration.

Instead, the Bureau prepared the UNFF15 draft resolution through a transparent and consultative process involving submission of inputs by members and stakeholders, and circulation of three revisions by email. To reach consensus and tackle pending issues, UNFF Member States held virtual informal consultations on 4 and 19 June 2020.

On 25 June 2020, UNFF15 Chair Boris Greguška (Slovakia) put the resulting decisions under the silence procedure until 4:00 pm New York time, on 30 June 2020. The silence procedure provides UN Member States with at least 72 hours to raise objections on a draft resolution or decision, and allows for explanations of position. The final decisions included the provisional agenda for UNFF16, the dates and venue of UNFF16, the UNFF15 draft report; and a decision to appoint Khalid Cherki (Morocco) to serve as Rapporteur for UNFF15.

The UNFF15 omnibus resolution, which covers six out of the 13 UNFF15 agenda items:

- adopts the programme of work for UNFF16 in 2021, and requests the Forum to decide on the programme of work for 2022-2024;
- requests the Secretariat to continue to develop the Forum’s concise flagship publication on progress towards achieving the Global Forest Goals and targets;
- requests the Secretariat to propose refinements to the format for reporting on voluntary national contributions based on lessons learned;
- requests the Secretariat to continue work on designing the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network clearing house, and report progress at UNFF17;

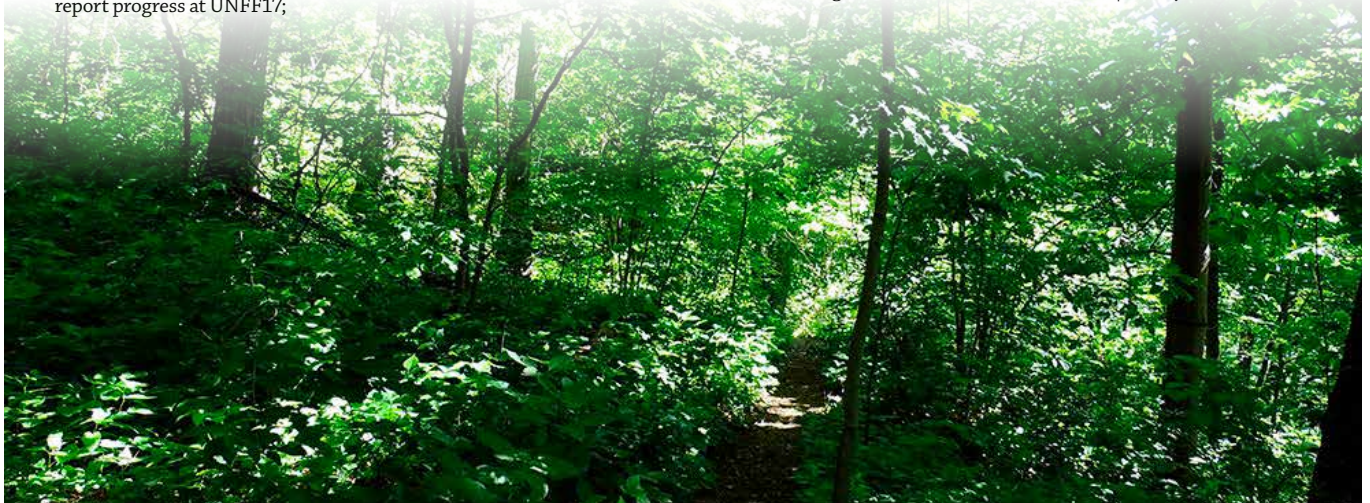


UNFF15 Chair, Mr. Boris Greguška. Photo credit: IISD.

- welcomes the adoption of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests strategic vision towards 2030;
- invites the Forum to provide concise targeted inputs to annual sessions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF);
- welcomes the agreement of the General Assembly to retain the sub-programme on sustainable forest management of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and maintain the classification of the post of Director of UNFF; and
- requests the UN Secretary-General to expedite the recruitment and appointment process for the post of UNFF Director.

Many questions remain on the future of the Forum in this new world. Will UNFF members rise to the new challenges, and back the Forum’s ambition? Will the recruitment of a new Forum Director be prioritised and expedited? Will countries act on national policies and support sustainable forest management and implementation of the UNSPF? As intersessional work in preparation for UNFF16 begins, many hope that the Forum is up to the task ahead, and can ensure that the forest agenda remains central to nature-based solutions for COVID-19 recovery. The opportunity, as some would say, has been served to the Forum on a silver platter. 🌿

Source: *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, Vol. 13 No. 216 | 10 July 2020.



APEC EGILAT18

The 18th (Virtual) Meeting of the APEC Experts Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT18) convened at the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC), in Putrajaya, Malaysia on 25 August 2020. MTC was part of the Malaysian delegation led by Mr. Pubadi Govindasamy, MPIC Senior Undersecretary, Timber, Tobacco and Kenaf Industries Division.

EGILAT18 was the first in its history to be conducted in full virtual meeting setup in light of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. APEC economies managed to overcome the shortcomings of a virtual meeting medium and made progresses on the policy theme project discussion.

The meeting was attended by representatives from 16 APEC economies, namely Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, the United States and Vietnam. The International Criminal Police Organization was also represented as a Non-Member Participant while the International Wood Products Associations was invited as an observer to the meeting.

Policy updates from economies regarding legal timber trade framework and the impact of Covid-19 pandemic were among the highlights of the meeting, as follows:

- Indonesia has made significant progress in controlling illegal logging and trade activities where the composition of illegal timber from export declined to roughly 28% in 2019 from over 80% in 2004.
- New Zealand will be announcing a new scheme governing the importation of legal timber called the "National Wood Legality Assurance System". This system will assess the respective due diligence procedures for timber products exports to New Zealand.
- Japan is continuing its effort in promoting the voluntary Clean Wood Act throughout the country. Japan's Fifth Energy Basic Plan will see the nation's share of biomass energy out of the total renewable energy production to increase to 3.7% - 4.6% by 2030.
- Papua New Guinea had in May 2020 just approved its Timber Legality System.
- The Philippines is planning to establish an enforcement agency to focus on monitoring both the natural resources and environment portfolio. This proposal is currently in debate at the Lower House.
- US Lacey Act Phase 6, planned to be implemented on 1 October 2020, has been delayed due to Covid-19. The proposed changes in the Act are mostly on biosecurity aspect with only two products under Chapter 44.
- The general impacts of Covid-19 on the timber trade include:
 - Declining demand for timber products during lockdown period;
 - Restriction in timber harvesting, processing and export;
 - Increased government intervention to help revive/sustain the timber industry;
 - Increased patrolling to avoid unscrupulous activities in the forest during social lockdown; and

- Higher cost of doing business such as low-price export market environment, high overhead cost, slower documentation/procedural and approvals, workers layoff and higher shipping rate.

EGILAT meetings are crucial towards maintaining a concerted effort among APEC economies and other countries (i.e., through cross-fora engagements) towards subduing the momentum of the trade in illegal timber products.

The way forward for the economies to combat the trade of illegal timber products is through enhanced information sharing among economies on database collection of wood species, enforcement techniques and experiences, and collaboration with international agencies.

Through EGILAT, Malaysia is able to share information on its industry practices on sustainable forest management, timber industry legal supply chain and exports.

The EGILAT18 meeting concluded within half-a-day and will convene in New Zealand in 2021. 🌱



Malaysian delegation leader, Mr. Pubadi Govindasamy.



Malaysia's delegation to EGILAT18.

MTCS certified forests increase to 5.29 million ha

Certified forests under the Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) increased to 5.29 million hectares with the award of certificates for forest management to five natural Forest Management Units (FMU) and a Forest Plantation Management Unit (FPMU) during the months of July-August 2020.

Of the five FMUs, four are in Sarawak and one in Johor. Gaat-Mengiong, Entulu-Melati, Mujong-Melinau and Danum are the Sarawak FMUs while the other is the Johor FMU. The FPMU, Sapulut, is located in Sabah.

The certification body for all the six certified forest areas is SIRIM QAS International Sdn Bhd. The standard for certifying the FMUs is the Malaysian Criteria & Indicators (MC&I) (Natural Forest) while for the FPMU it is the MC&I Forest Plantation.v2.

The certificates for management of both, the natural and plantation forests, have been awarded following successful certification audits of the respective forest areas. The certificates are valid for five years, subject to continued compliance based on yearly surveillance audits.

Johor FMU

Located within the State of Johor Permanent Forest Reserve, the Johor FMU covers an area of 285,292.87 hectares. Managed by the Johor State Forestry Department, the Johor FMU was awarded the Certificate for Forest Management (Natural Forest) on 3 July 2020. Johor is the southern-most state in Peninsular Malaysia.

Gaat-Mengiong FMU

Located in Kapit Division of Sarawak, the 60,190-hectare Gaat-Mengiong FMU is managed by Billion Venture Sdn Bhd. The FMU was awarded the Certificate for Forest Management (Natural Forest) on 10 July 2020. Dipterocarps make up about 46% of stem enumerated whereas non-dipterocarps accounted for 31% of stem inventoried. The remaining 23% were found to be non-commercial, and these are potential mother trees.

Entulu-Melati FMU

Comprising 55,112 hectares, the Entulu-Melatai FMU is situated at the upper reaches of Sungai Entulu and Sungai Entuloh in Kapit, Sarawak. Managed by Interglobal Empire Sdn Bhd, the Entulu-Melatai FMU underwent a forest management certification audit from 23-27 November 2019 before being awarded the Certificate for Forest Management (Natural Forest) on 24 July 2020.

GREEN GROWTH

Danum FMU

Covering an area of 200,383 hectares within the Heart of Borneo, the Danum FMU is located at the upper Sungai Murum area in Kapit district of Sarawak. Managed by Shin Yang Sdn Bhd, the Danum FMU was awarded the Certificate for Forest Management (Natural Forest) on 8 August 2020. The certification audit was conducted from 11-16 November 2019.

Mujong-Melinau FMU

Managed by Subur Tiasa Holdings Berhad, the Mujong-Melinau FMU was awarded the Certificate for Forest Management (Natural Forest) on 24 August 2020 following a successful certification audit conducted from 9-12 December 2019. The Mujong-Melinau FMU, covering an area of 41,696 hectares is located in the central region of Sarawak within the Kapit Division. It is about 65 kilometers upriver from the town of Kapit.

Sapulut FPMU

Sapulut FPMU was officially certified on 3 July 2020 for Forest Management Certification (Forest Plantation.v2). Managed by Sapulut Forest Development Sdn Bhd (SFDSB), the Sapulut FPMU certified area covers 12,486.42 hectares in Tibow, Sabah. Currently *Albizia* (*Paraserianthes falcataria*) and *Laran* (*Neolamarckia cadamba* and *Neolamarckia macrophylla*) are the two main commercial fast-growing species planted. SFDSB is looking at the possibility of introducing *Eucalyptus pelita* in the near future.

The MTCS has been endorsed, for the first time on 1 May 2009, by the PEFC, the largest forest certification programme representing more than 300 million ha of certified forests worldwide.





Valid MTCS-Certified Forests, August 2020

Forest Management Unit

	Size (ha)
1. Bornion Timber Sdn Bhd – Natural Forest (FMU11)	40,924.72
2. KTS Plantation Sdn Bhd – Segaliud Lokan FMU	57,247.00
3. Negeri Sembilan State Forestry Department	155,548.68
4. Pahang State Forestry Department	1,504,407.35
5. Perak State Forestry Department	988,603.94
6. Ravenscourt Sdn Bhd – Ravenscourt FMU	117,941.00
7. Sapulut Forest Development Sdn Bhd (FMU 14)	54,643.00
8. Selangor State Forestry Department	238,747.00
9. Tanjong Manis Holdings Sdn Bhd – Kapit FMU	149,756.00
10. Terengganu State Forestry Department	540,308.80
11. Zedtee Sdn Bhd – Anap Muput FMU	83,535.00
12. Shin Yang Trading Sdn Bhd – Linau Fmu	72,685.00
13. Samling Timber Sdn Bhd – Ulu Trusan FMU	92,751.00
14. Jaya Tiasa Holdings Bhd – Bahau Kahei FMU	45,035.00
15. Raplex Sdn Bhd – Raplex FMU	63,993.00
16. Solid Hartabina Sdn Bhd – Melatai Para FMU	49,524.00
17. Pasin Sdn Bhd – Pasin FMU	132,151.00
18. Samling Plywood (Miri) Sdn Bhd – Gerenai FMU	148,305.00
19. Johor State Forestry Department – Johor FMU	285,292.87
20. Billion Venture Sdn Bhd – Gaat-Mengiong FMU	66,190.00
21. Interglobal Empire Sdn Bhd – Entulu Melatai FMU	55,112.00
22. Shin Yang Sdn Bhd – Danum FMU	200,383.00
23. Subur Tiasa Holdings Bhd – Mujong-Melinau FMU	41,696.00
Total Certified FMU Area	5,184,780.36

Forest Plantation Management Unit

	Size (ha)
1. Bornion Timber Sdn Bhd – Plantation Forest (FPMU 11)	25,536.71
2. Samling Reforestation (BTU) Sdn Bhd LPF 0006 – Lana FPMU	9,393.00
3. Shin Yang Plywood Sdn Bhd LPF 0018 – Penyuan FPMU	15,261.00
4. Syarikat Samling Timber Sdn Bhd LPF 0014 – Segan FPMU	10,332.00
5. Samling Reforestation (Bintulu) Sdn Bhd – Marudi FPMU	19,941.00
6. Shin Yang Plywood Sdn Bhd LPF 0019 – Masama FPMU	11,946.00
7. Sapulut Forest Development Sdn Bhd – Sapulut FPMU	12,486.42
Total Certified FPMU Area	104,896.13

Total Certified MTCS Forests **5,289,676.49**

Source: MTCC

About MTCS

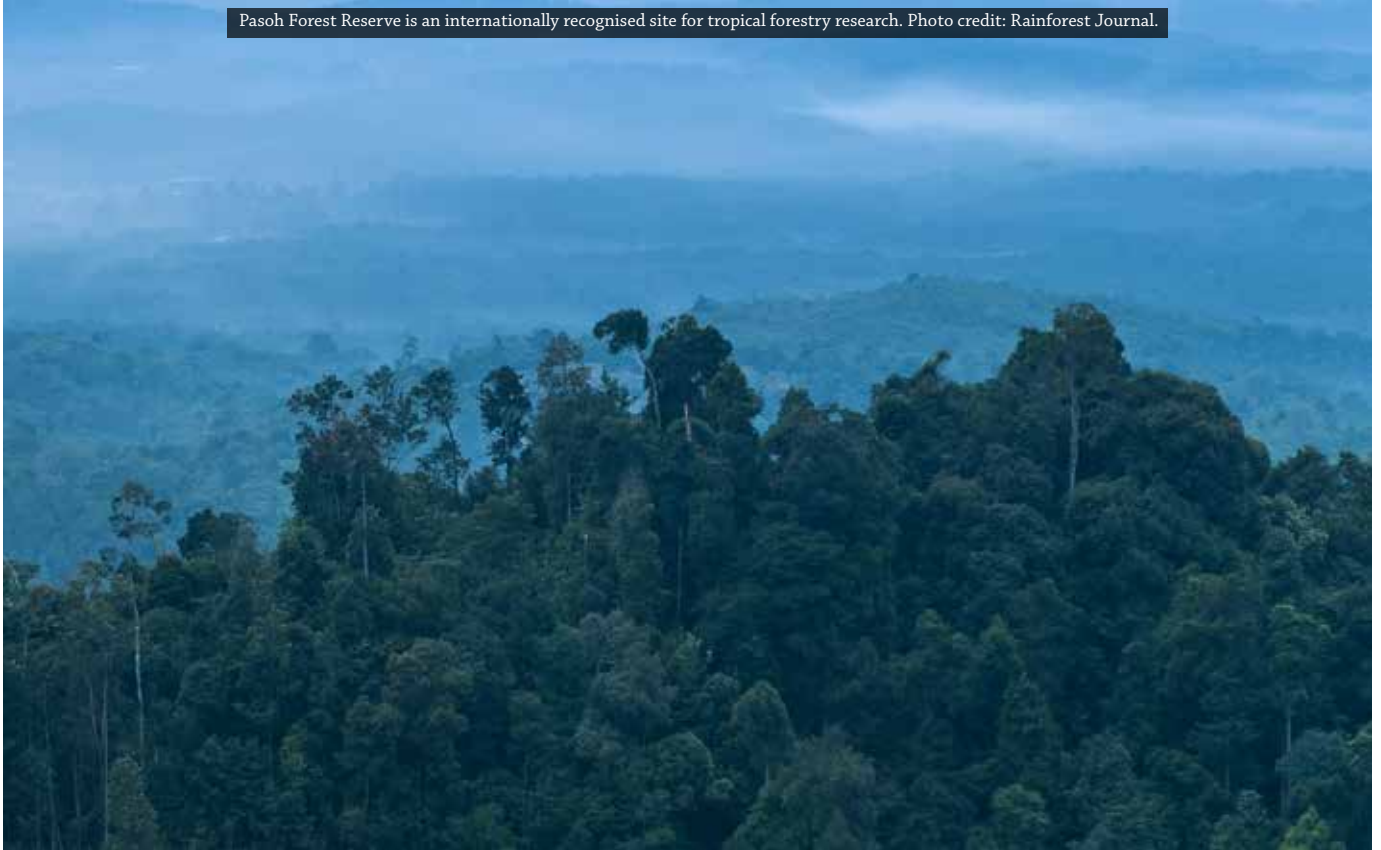
The MTCS is operated by the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC), which started operation in January 1999 as an independent organisation. As a voluntary national scheme, the MTCS provides for independent assessment of forest management practices and audit of timber product manufacturers or exporters to ascertain that the timber products manufactured or exported are sourced from sustainably managed forests. This is to ensure the sustainable management of Malaysia's natural forest and forest plantations, as well as to meet the demand for certified timber products. The audits are conducted by independent certification body (CB) notified under the MTCC.

The MTCS has been endorsed, for the first time on 1 May 2009, by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) schemes, the largest forest certification programme, representing more than 300 million ha of certified forests worldwide. The MTCS is also the first tropical timber certification scheme in the Asia Pacific region to be endorsed by the PEFC. 🌱

References:

- Malaysian Timber Certification Council (www.mtcc.com.my)
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Pasoh Forest Reserve is an internationally recognised site for tropical forestry research. Photo credit: Rainforest Journal.



Pasoh Forest Reserve, Negeri Sembilan



The forest of Pasoh is also of great interest to botanists and nature lovers. Photo credit: Rainforest Journal.



Research into forestry dynamics has been conducted at Pasoh since 1970. Photo credit: Rainforest Journal.

Pasoh Forest Reserve located in Simpang Pertang, Negeri Sembilan, is an internationally recognised site for tropical forestry research. For researchers, there is a well-equipped Field Studies Center there, called the Pasoh Forestry Research Centre (PFRC) managed by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM).

Comprising a core area of about 600 hectares of primary forest within a larger area of about 2,400 hectares, this forest is classified as a Red Meranti-Keruing forest, due to the large number of dominant trees from both timber groups found growing there.

Research into forestry dynamics has been conducted at Pasoh since 1970, and there are many forest plots that have been monitored for years, including a 50-hectare plot that has been enumerated and monitored for decades in collaboration with foreign institutions.

The forest of Pasoh is also of great interest to botanists and nature lovers. Among the interesting features are the Arboretum, the Nature Trail, the Tree Tower and Canopy Walkway system and the rich flora and fauna found there.

The 2.2-hectare Arboretum is located just before the buildings in the Field Research Station and provides a good place to learn about many of the plant species found in Malaysia's tropical rainforests. Many of the plants there are tagged and identified. Among the interesting ones are big Licuala palms and even bigger specimens of *Livistona saribus* (a type of serdang palm).

The 50-hectare plot in the middle of Pasoh is where a lot of research has been carried out. This permanent plot was established sometime in 1985, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution, and so far, well over 800 species of trees above 1cm diameter at breast height have been identified and mapped. For such a small area, the tree flora of a virgin forest like Pasoh is exceedingly rich indeed.

Comprising a core area of about 600 hectares of primary forest within a larger area of about 2,400 hectares, this forest is classified as a Red Meranti-Keruing forest.



The Arboretum is one of Pasoh's many interesting features. Photo credit: Rainforest Journal.

The Nature Trail is located a bit further up opposite the Arboretum and is a circular looping trail which ends near the start of the Main Trailhead. Meant for day visitors to Pasoh, the trail passes through secondary forest for much of the way but enters primary forest near towards the end of the trail, before rejoining the Main Trail in Pasoh.

For those who like waterfalls, there are several close by, one of which is in the Serting Ulu Recreational Forest, just a few kilometers away. This is a picturesque and serene waterfall, ideal for cooling off, or merely to relax amidst verdant surroundings. 🌿

Source: Rainforest Journal (www.rainforestjournal.com – by Jungleboy).

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