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STA dan Rakan2

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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Field Testing On High Conservation Values (HCVs) Training Modules for Sarawak



Photo: Participants setting up camera trap during practical session

In 2018, the *Malaysian National Interpretation for the Identification of High Conservation Values (HCVs)* document was developed to include different terrestrial ecosystems throughout Malaysia and is aligned to the Common Guidance document by HCV Resource Network (HCV RN), supersedes the High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) Toolkit for Malaysia published by WWF-Malaysia in 2009.

The six (6) categories of HCVs defined are as follows:

HCV 1 Species diversity

Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels.

HCV 2 Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics

Intact forest landscapes and large

landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

HCV 3 Ecosystems and habitats

Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.

HCV 4 Ecosystem services

Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.

HCV 5 Community needs

Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with communities or indigenous peoples.

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HCV 6 Cultural values

Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or indigenous peoples, identified through engagements with these local communities or indigenous peoples.

Following this development, Dr Yap Son Keong, an experienced forest management certification auditor and HCV assessor, developed the *HCVs Training Modules for Sarawak Forest Management Units (FMUs)* with technical inputs from forestry agencies and WWF-Malaysia.

The Training Modules is tailor-made to the conditions and needs of Sarawak and is specifically developed to assist forest managers and HCV assessors in identification of HCV sites within a forest area, development of monitoring system and preparation of reports.

To enhance the Training Modules, a field testing, facilitated by Dr Yap, was jointly conducted by Forest Department Sarawak (FDS), Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd (SFC), Sarawak Timber Association (STA) and WWF-Malaysia from 6 to 10 May 2019 at Central Base Camp (CTB) and Gerenai FMU, both located in Ulu Baram, Miri.

The field testing was attended by resource persons from FDS, SFC, WWF-Malaysia as well as representatives from the timber industry and STA.

The five-day field testing includes (i) presentations of the draft HCV Training Modules by Dr Yap; (ii) techniques for flora and fauna survey and sampling, social consultation, Geographic Information System (GIS) applications and HCVs mapping by resource persons from FDS, SFC and WWF-Malaysia; and (iii) field exercise to the proposed Muja Julan National Park for camera trapping, drone usage and flora survey, as well as social consultation at Long Anap in Ulu Baram.

Participants shared that it is impossible to determine accurately all sites present in a large FMU within a short period of time. Hence, a progressive approach following an operational progress will be able to provide continuous addition of HCV sites.

A stakeholder consultation will be held after June 2019 and the finalised Training Modules is expected to be printed and ready by end of 2019.



Photo: Participants of the Training listens attentively to the presentation of Training Modules by Dr Yap.

Occupational Safety and Health (Noise Exposure) Regulations 2019

The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) under the Ministry of Human Resources recently made major revisions to the laws relating to noise exposure at workplaces.

The previous regulations known as the *Factories and Machinery (Noise Exposure) Regulations 1989* will be

revoked and replaced with the *Occupational Safety and Health (Noise Exposure) Regulations 2019* (New Regulations).

Gazetted on 1 March 2019, the New Regulations will come into effect on 1 June 2019. They are intended to ensure that employers identify excessive noise, protect

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Did you know that....

Advances in chemical and genetic fingerprinting have made it possible to determine where a tree grew. Hence, scientists around the world are developing a suite of tools that can identify the species, country and region from which a specific timber came from. However, lack of reference samples remains an obstacle to develop a library of the world's forests. This is why wood anatomists are more in demand than ever now.

Source: *Why Wood Anatomists are More in Demand than Ever*. Available at <https://globaltimbertrackingnetwork.org/2019/05/17/why-wood-anatomists-are-more-in-demand-than-ever/>

Did you also know that....

Tam, Malaysia's last surviving male Sumatran rhino died, pushing the critically endangered species closer to extinction with only one female rhino left in the country. Sumatran rhinos are solitary creatures and isolation is the single biggest threat to the species' continued existence because females of this species can develop cysts and fibroids in their reproductive tracts if they go too long without mating and such was the cause of previous failed attempt to breed Tam with two (2) female rhinos.

Source: Malaysia's Last Sumatran Rhinos Dies, Dashing Hopes to Save the Species in the Country. Available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-28/last-malaysian-sumatran-male-rhino-dies/11154776>



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employees and control excessive noise level at all workplaces covered under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994* (OSHA 1994), not limited to factories.

The New Regulations cover the following:

i. Identification of excessive noise

Under the New Regulations, the employer shall identify whether an employee is exposed to excessive noise at the workplace. The review for identification of excessive noise shall be done when (i) there is a change in machinery, equipment, process, work, control measures or operation; (ii) after one year from date of previous identification; or (iii) if directed by Director General (DG) of DOSH.

ii. Noise risk assessment

Upon identification, the employer shall appoint a registered noise risk assessor to carry out noise risk assessment.

The noise risk assessor shall then submit a report which includes findings and recommendations to the employer within one (1) month from the date of assessment completion.

The employer will need to notify affected employees about the report as well as implement the recommendations after receiving the report. The assessment is required to be reviewed within five (5) years from the last assessment date or if directed by DG of DOSH.

iii. Information, instruction, training and supervision

The employer needs to provide affected employees with (i) adequate information regarding the effects of noise exposure and requirement of audiometric testing; (ii) training and instruction on proper usage of personal hearing protector; and (iii) supervision for implementation of noise exposure control at the workplace. Training shall be provided at least once a year.

iv. Noise exposure limit

Employees shall not be exposed to (i) daily noise exposure level exceeding 85dB(A) or daily personal

noise dose exceeding hundred percent; (ii) maximum sound pressure level exceeding 115dB(A) at any time; or (iii) peak sound pressure level exceeding 140dB(C). If employees are exposed to an excessive noise which exceeds the limit specified, the employer needs to assess whether it is practical to reduce such excessive noise either through engineering and / or administrative control.

v. Equipment, zone demarcation and audiometric testing

A suitable and efficient personal hearing protector needs to be made available to affected employees.

For any area of the workplace exposed to excessive noise exceeding the limit specified, it has to be demarcated and identified appropriately. Annual audiometric testing also needs to be provided for the employees at no cost.

vi. Keeping records

The New Regulations also require the employer to keep and maintain all related records for a period of time, i.e. report of noise risk assessment for not less than 30 years; report of audiometric testing for as long as the employee is employed and for a period of five (5) years after the employee is no longer with the company.

If there is a business takeover, all records are to be handed over and kept accordingly. Any disposal of records at the expiration of the period, the employer will need to inform the DG of DOSH in writing at least three (3) months in advance.

Any failure to comply with the New Regulations will result in fine not exceeding RM10,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one (1) year or both.

It should also be noted that the DOSH had issued the *Factories and Machinery (Noise Exposure) (Revocation) Regulations 2019* containing transitional provisions for the change.

More details are available on DOSH website, accessible at www.dosh.gov.my.

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Compliance with Environmental Quality (Clean Air) Regulations 2014

The Environmental Quality (Clean Air) Regulations 2014 or CAR 2014 replacing the *Environmental Quality (Clean Air) Regulations 1978* was enforced on 5 June 2014. Existing industrial facilities were given a 5-year grace period until 4 June 2019 to comply with the law.

STA panel products members have expressed their concern on the compliance with the CAR 2014. Manufacturing mills are required to improvise their emission monitoring system by installing specialised equipment to determine dust, particle and smoke emission rate.

Among some of the causes of concern are the difficulty to find workers with necessary technical expertise and high cost of installing the equipment which ranges from RM1.5 million to RM2.7 million per unit.

In the current weak market situation, the costly expenditure will inevitably increase the production costs of the mills. Moreover, the awareness programmes on CAR 2014 was not well targeted in Sarawak. On 29 May 2019, Puan Dayang Nena Abang Bruce, Deputy General

Manager of Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) and representatives from STA brought the concern to the attention of Puan Mashitah Binti Darus, Director of Air Division, Department of Environment (DOE) in Kuala Lumpur.

In discussing way forward to facilitate compliance, Puan Mashitah has agreed to consider STIDC's request to submit a Letter of Undertaking on behalf of the timber mills in Sarawak for an extension of the grace period.

The request for extension would be granted with conditions that, during the extended grace period, (i) timber mills shall submit to DOE the Contravention Licence application on or before 24 June 2019 and indicate their commitment to comply with the CAR 2014, and (ii) STA and STIDC shall organise briefings on the CAR 2014 throughout Sarawak.

These briefings shall be held in three (3) locations, namely Kuching on 12 June 2019, Miri on 13 June 2019 and Sibu on 14 June 2019 respectively.

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