

Headline	FRIM to reforest UTM campus		
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# FRIM to reforest UTM campus

**ROOTED:** Forest Research Institute Malaysia to employ 'systematic cluster planting' method that will gradually replace the old rubber trees with new timber species

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UNIVERSITI Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) has engaged the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) to help reforest an old rubber plantation located in its campus here, starting this year with a 10-ha area to be planted with high-quality timber species.

The signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between UTM and FRIM for the project to be undertaken over a period of five years was recently held at the UTM Skudai campus in Johor Baru.

FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod represented the Malaysian Forestry Research and Development Board (MFRDB) and UTM vice-chancellor Datuk Prof Dr Zaini Ujang represented the university.

Latif said FRIM would use a different planting method known as "systematic cluster planting", which allows the old rubber trees to remain and gradually be replaced with the selected species with a target den-

sity of 350 to 500 trees per ha.

The selected timber species include *meranti*, *chengal*, *keruing*, *merbau*, *nyatoh* and *jelutong*. The reforestation project also includes the cultivation of 30 local and exotic commercial bamboo species, which can be used for construction, as well as the setting up of a herbal garden within the 10-ha area.

FRIM has been involved in reforestation activities for about 100 years.

Its main campus in Kepong is a model for successful reforestation as one of the oldest and largest man-made tropical forests in the world.

FRIM has also been successful in rehabilitating and reforesting a former tin mining area of 115ha in Bidor, Perak, and some 50ha of BRIS soil site in Terengganu.

Recently, FRIM was also appointed by a private firm to reforest a former mining area in Pengkalan Hulu, Perak, using the fast track system to plant fast-growing tree species over a period of five years.

The FRIM-UTM MoU will also pave the way for the establishment

of a twin campus programme, in line with the university's aim to work towards an Eco Tropical JB Campus and the attainment of a world class quality innovative education in tropical environment.

Among others, the MoU provides for the exchange of researchers, staff and students to undertake joint research assignments or projects which may result in joint reports, publication and study visits; exchange of information on the system and structure of higher education, reforms and new educational technologies; training and capacity building; and other areas of cooperation in forestry and forest products research.

Present to witness the signing ceremony were UTM vice-chancellor (Development) Prof Dr Wahid Omar, Dr Maketab Muhamed, Prof Dr Zuklifli Yusop and Assoc Prof Dr Abd Latif Saleh from UTM; and FRIM Forest Plantation Programme head Dr Ahmad Zuhaidi Yahya, senior researcher, Dr Hashim Md Noor and corporate management head Norhayati Nordin.

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*Datuk Dr. Abdul Latif Mohamad (left) and Datuk Prof Dr Zaini Ujang sign the MoU for the **reforestation project to be undertaken over a period of five years** at the UTM Skudai campus. Pic by Roslan Khamis*