

Headline	Plantation to be reforested		
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Plantation to be reforested

UTM signs an MoU with FRIM to reforest an old rubber plantation on its campus in Skudai. >4

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UTM signs MOU with institute to reforest rubber plantation

UNIVERSITI Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) has engaged the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) to help reforest an old rubber plantation located in its campus in Skudai, Johor, 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 to provide for this project to be undertaken over a period of five years was held on 30 April 2012 at the UTM Skudai campus in Johor Bahru.

Representing the Malaysian Forestry Research and Development Board (MFRDB) was the FRIM Director General (DG) Dato' Dr Abd Latif Mohmod, while the university was represented by its Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dato' Ir Dr Zaini Ujang.

According to Abd Latif, FRIM will 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 density of 350-500

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, making it one of the oldest and largest man-made tropical forests in the world. FRIM has also been successful in rehabilitating and reforesting an ex-tin mining area of 115 ha in Bidor, Perak, and some 50-ha of BRIS soil site in Terengganu.

Recently, FRIM has also be appointed by a private firm to reforest an ex-mining area in Pengkalan Hulu, Perak, using the fast tract 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 exchange of researchers, staff and students for mutual benefits including undertaking 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.

Also present to witness the signing ceremony were UTM Vice Chancellor (Development) Prof. Ir Dr Wahid Omar, Dr Maketab Muhamed, Prof. Dr Zuklifi 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, Puan Norhayati Nordin.

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Done deal: Abd Latif and Zaini exchanging documents after signing.