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## Master plan enhanced to preserve flora, fauna

by NUR HAZIQAH A MALEK

**THE** Improving Connectivity in the Central Forest Spine (IC-CFS) project has embarked on a new chapter by revealing a work plan to enhance and strengthen the CFS Master Plan for Ecological Linkages Master Plan.

IC-CFS landscape national project director Datuk Zahari Ibrahim hoped the renewed approach through the IC-CFS project would bring positive impact to the continuous implementation of the master plan in re-establishing connectivity between forest blocks and

protecting the country's biodiversity and ecosystem.

"This project is meant to provide cohesive sustainable planning that could preserve our precious flora and fauna for future generations.

"The efforts of rehabilitating landscapes and piloting integrated forest landscape management would bring great benefits to the country and its people in the decades to come," he said in a statement recently.

In the coming months, he said the IC-CFS project will be rolling out a suite of other activities ranging from consultation with stake-

holders for gazettement of corridors, training and capacity building, tree planting initiatives, and education and awareness programmes.

"A healthy ecosystem is our most valuable treasure that could not be traded with modernity.

"They are not meant to be conflicting with one another, but rather to coexist harmoniously," he added.

The project is led by the government and the United Nations Development Programme, which aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of federal and state

governments and other relevant agencies to better plan, manage and conserve major forest landscapes in Perak, Pahang and Johor.

It is also seeking to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services in the priority forest landscapes within the master plan and envisions to set up sustainable financing mechanisms including alternative funding sources such as payment-for-ecosystem services schemes for the conservation of the CFS.

It was conceived in 2014, and led by the Forestry Department of Pen-

insular Malaysia (FDPM) in close collaboration with two other vital partner agencies, namely the Forest Research Institute Malaysia and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

By far, the master plan has restored and preserved 609ha of forest habitat, and a total of 23,735ha of state land gazetted and declared as permanent forest reserves within its ecological corridors.

The spatial monitoring and reporting tool will also be piloted by the FDPM to achieve an integrated enforcement approach for the CFS landscape.