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Transforming former mine land into forest

Pioneer, medium quality species trees to be planted

KUALA LUMPUR: The Forest Research Institute Malaysia (Frim) and Rahman Hydraulic Tin Sdn Bhd (RHT) have initiated a reafforestation project on a former tin mine land of 20ha at RHT Klian Intan, Gerik, Hulu Perak.

Frim's Forestry Biotechnology Division director Dr Mohd Zaki Abdullah said the first phase of the project was from 2011 to 2016 and involved Acacia (mimosa), dipterocarp species Imerawan siput jantan, meranti tembaga (*Shorea leprosula*) and meranti temak nipis (*Shorea roxburghii*).

"It also involved open planting of meranti temak nipis, reforestation at overburdened areas and rehabilitation of Sungai Kepayang's riverbanks with endemic species including bamboos.

"The second phase from 2017 to 2020 involved rehabilitation at Sungai Kijang with riverine species and bamboos, rehabilitation of ex-slime storage area of Sungai Kepayang within RHT mining area

with mixed stand of both dipterocarp and dipterocarps," he said.

This shows that modified ex-mining lands can be restored by planting with pioneer species, including Acacia mangium and later with medium quality tree species such as meranti temak nipis, merawan siput jantan and sungkai (*Peronema canescens*), reported Bernama.

Frim is also collaborating with Specific Resources Sdn Bhd to develop model forest stands for the purpose of rehabilitation of ex-gold mining land, greening of existing wastelands and gathering information for a future Mine Rehabilitation Plan for a period of two years.

The areas of formerly waste rocks or burden areas were semi mechanically prepared by spreading, broadcasting, and compacting with 50cm to 70cm thickness of mineral soil to provide growing space for future root development of planted trees.

The afforestation initiative in the Penjom Gold Mining Lands covers

an area of 5ha and the planting areas are mostly of gentle sloping terrain of 15 to 35 degrees, with isolated growth of planted grasses on the lower slopes.

According to Zaki, a total of 3,515 seedlings with seven species which includes two dipterocarps and five non-dipterocarps were planted following the suitability at four separated blocks of different sloping terrain.

"Currently, efforts are ongoing for afforestation with endangered or important species over a 1.2ha area in SPF Bidor and SPF Segamat under the 12th Malaysian Plan.

"The efforts of rehabilitation and restoration with trees provide countless benefits to the earth.

"Besides increasing the green lung, it also provides the opportunity to sequester carbon dioxide, creation of germplasm conservation of threatened species phytoremediation and regulating microclimate of the environment for enhanced biodiversity and ecosystem services," he said.